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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 34

Offered January 15, 1998

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the emergency medical services system in the Commonwealth.

Patrons—Davies, Harris and Orrock; Senator: Houck

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth's emergency medical services (EMS) system is recognized as one of the best in the nation; and

WHEREAS, although certain densely populated areas have switched to paid or municipally operated emergency medical services, the majority of rural areas and many urban areas are still served primarily by volunteer squads; and

WHEREAS, although there have been several studies over the last six years to address the problems in Virginia's emergency medical services, debate concerning staffing, education, and the rigor and frequency of and access to training, the use of paid rather than volunteer emergency medical services personnel, the operation of private ambulance services, and the State Medical Air Evacuation (MEDIVAC) system are among the issues and problems which have not been resolved to the satisfaction of the emergency medical services community; and

WHEREAS, there continues to be concern about the governance of the emergency medical services system, evidenced by the growing friction between local emergency medical services offices, the volunteer system, and the State Office of Emergency Medical Services; and

WHEREAS, high morale, good communications, reasonable compromise, and strong cooperation are essential to maintaining the quality and efficiency of Virginia's emergency medical services system; and

WHEREAS, although legislation has been enacted to ameliorate many of the problems previously noted, further study is warranted to address lingering issues which, left unattended, would compromise the Commonwealth's excellent and vital statewide emergency medical services system; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the emergency medical services system in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall be composed of nine members as follows: five members of the House of Delegates, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and four members of the Senate, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) review the governing structure of the emergency medical services system with the view toward determining the basis for the growing friction between the local emergency medical services offices, the volunteer system, and the State Emergency Medical Services Office, and offer methods to resolve conflicts within and among the various sectors of the EMS system; (ii) identify the continuing issues and problems concerning the education and training of emergency medical services personnel; (iii) identify the issues surrounding the controversy pertaining to paid and volunteer emergency medical service personnel; (iv) examine issues related to private ambulance services, including access to and the cost and quality of such services, and the sufficiency of existing regulation of private ambulance services to ensure the public's health, safety, and welfare; (v) determine the adequacy of emergency medical services throughout the Commonwealth, including the status and needs of the State MEDIVAC System, specifically the issues identified and study objectives proposed by the Joint Subcommittee Studying Certain Emergency Medical Services Training and Governance Issues in HJR 636 (1997); and (vi) consider such related issues as the joint subcommittee may deem necessary to ensure the viability of the statewide EMS system.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$ 6,750.

The Division of Legislative Services shall provide staff support for the study. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1999 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

INTRODUCED

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