

# 1998 SESSION

ENROLLED

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 93

*Continuing the Commission on Youth's study of status offenders, children in need of services, and children in need of supervision as the Commission on Youth's study of truants and runaways.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 17, 1998

Agreed to by the Senate, March 10, 1998

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 490 (1997) directed the Commission on Youth to establish a task force to study status offenders, children in need of services, and children in need of supervision; and

WHEREAS, during its first year of inquiry, the task force held focus group meetings in eleven localities across Virginia, receiving valuable input from direct service providers and over two hundred participants; and

WHEREAS, the focus groups heard a variety of concerns about the Commonwealth's ability to provide immediate and effective intervention for truants and runaways to prevent their downward spiral into criminal behavior, chronic substance abuse, dropping out of school and other destructive activities; and

WHEREAS, the findings of the focus groups and other research activities have prompted the task force to issue recommendations to improve the response to this population; and

WHEREAS, these recommendations include: increasing the range of community base interventions for runaways, truants, and their families prior to court involvement, broadening sanctions available to the court for youths and their parents, expanding the availability of academic options, strengthening accountability systems in the child serving agencies, improving the court docketing systems, and providing training to front line personnel; and

WHEREAS, the task force has identified specific issues for inquiry for a second year of study; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Commission on Youth's study of status offenders, children in need of services, and children in need of supervision be continued as the Commission on Youth's study of truants and runaways. The members appointed to the task force pursuant to HJR No. 490 (1997) shall continue to serve, except that any vacancies shall be filled by the original appointing authorities as provided in the enabling resolution.

During the course of its study, the Commission shall examine (i) the feasibility of using hearing officers to handle status offense cases of the Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court, (ii) approaches to increase parental responsibility, (iii) the advisability of increasing sanctions for status offenders, (iv) the impact of vocational education on truancy, and (v) the development of a long range funding plan for services to status offenders and their families.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The Commission 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.

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