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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 190

Offered January 26, 1998

Requesting the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Supreme Court, in consultation with the Juvenile Court Clerks Association, to study alternative means of ensuring that court practices and procedures provide adequate advance notice and meaningful public access to juvenile court proceedings involving serious juvenile offenders.

Patrons—Mims, Howell, Norment and Reynolds; Delegates: Baker and Davis

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in 1996, the General Assembly of Virginia enacted comprehensive changes in the laws governing juveniles charged with committing crimes; and

WHEREAS, these changes resulted from a growing public frustration with a system that appeared to favor protection of a juvenile offender's privacy interests over legitimate public safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, a significant aspect of this legislation opened for public scrutiny certain juvenile court proceedings and juvenile court records involving older juveniles charged with serious felonies; and

WHEREAS, because of the continued need to retain confidentiality and privacy with regard to other matters handled by the juvenile courts, logistical problems have arisen for the public, the media, and the clerks in determining which proceedings will be open to the public, and when and where those proceedings will take place; and

WHEREAS, there is a need to provide uniformity and standards of practice for judicial personnel to follow to ensure proper public access and consistent implementation of the state's public policy regarding juveniles; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Office of the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Supreme Court, in consultation with the Juvenile Court Clerks Association, be requested to study alternative means of ensuring that court practices and procedures provide adequate advance notice and meaningful public access to juvenile court proceedings involving serious juvenile offenders.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Office of the Executive Secretary by the Commission on Youth. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Office of the Executive Secretary for this study, upon request.

The Office of the Executive Secretary of the Virginia Supreme Court 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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