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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 195

Offered January 26, 1998

Requesting the Department of General Services, in cooperation with the Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and other interested associations to study issues related to the upkeep of historically significant cemeteries and graves.

Patrons—Edwards; Delegate: Woodrum

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, in recent years the General Assembly repeatedly has been presented with issues pertaining to the upkeep of certain historically significant cemeteries and family burial grounds; and

WHEREAS, there is a potential for historically significant graves to be abandoned and neglected; and

WHEREAS, units of government, including state and local governments, frequently are requested to assume financial responsibility for maintaining graves, particularly those which may have historical significance or are located in abandoned or neglected cemeteries; and

WHEREAS, there are no agreed-upon standards on what constitutes a historically significant grave or cemetery; and

WHEREAS, state and local resources are limited; and

WHEREAS, several associations have expressed an interest in receiving state or local funding to maintain graves; and

WHEREAS, no guidelines exist for assisting state and local governments to determine whether or to what extent those governments, in combination with various associations, can or should assume care for abandoned or neglected graves; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Division of Building and Engineering of the Department of General Services, in cooperation with the Department of Historic Resources, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, and such other organizations as may register an interest with the Department of General Services, be requested to study issues related to the upkeep of historically significant cemeteries and graves. The study shall consider (i) guidelines to be developed by the Department of Historic Resources to determine which graves and cemeteries may be historically significant; (ii) the number of graves and cemeteries in the Commonwealth that may be considered historically significant; (iii) the annual funding that is currently provided pursuant to § 10.1-2211 of the Code of Virginia; (iv) the annual funding that may be required to maintain existing and additional historically significant cemeteries and graves; (v) whether associations requesting such funds should be required to provide matching funds or services; and (vi) the optimal percentage of funds or services that associations may be expected to contribute in the event that state or local governments provide resources for the maintenance of such graves.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of General Services, upon request.

The Department of General Services shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2000 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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