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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 88

Offered January 23, 1998

*Requesting the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status and Needs of African-American Males in Virginia to collaborate with the City of Richmond Police Department and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to sponsor and conduct a statewide criminal justice symposium.*

Patron—Barry

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, at year-end 1996, the total number of prisoners under the jurisdiction of federal and state adult correctional authorities grew by more than 5 percent to include over 1.1 million persons; and

WHEREAS, on December 31, 1995, an estimated 3.2 percent of all African-American males in the United States were imprisoned, as compared to less than one percent for white males, making them seven times more likely to be in prison; and

WHEREAS, as of June 30, 1996, an estimated 63.4 percent of 27,770 persons confined in Virginia's correctional facilities were African-American males, as compared to 29.8 percent for white males; and

WHEREAS, although conviction and transfer rates have remained constant in lieu of the implementation of the Serious Juvenile Offender law, statistics show that African-American males comprised a majority of the juveniles sentenced in 1996, and that they received harsher sentences; and

WHEREAS, there is an immediate need to overcome the perception by minority communities that they receive disparate treatment from law enforcement personnel based on race; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status and Needs of African-American Males in Virginia be requested to collaborate with the City of Richmond Police Department and other federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to sponsor and conduct a statewide criminal justice symposium. Invited participants shall include federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, Department of Criminal Justice Services personnel, judicial agencies, and citizens.

In conducting the symposium, the joint subcommittee shall (i) review the training of local law enforcement personnel, court services personnel, and officers of the court regarding disparate treatment of African-American males; (ii) examine how information related to the disparate treatment of minorities within the criminal justice system is disseminated at the local levels; (iii) assess the relationship between law enforcement personnel and members of minority communities; (iv) identify solutions and feasible alternatives which address issues and concerns raised; and (v) investigate other related issues deemed appropriate.

An estimated \$50,000 is allocated to the joint subcommittee to conduct the criminal justice symposium. Such expenses shall be funded by a separate appropriation by the General Assembly.

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

The Joint Subcommittee Studying the Status and Needs of African-American Males in Virginia shall include a summary of the symposium proceedings in its report 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.

INTRODUCED

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