

# 1999 SESSION

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 606

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study prison industries in Virginia.*

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 25, 1999

Agreed to by the Senate, February 23, 1999

WHEREAS, increasingly, federal and state prisoners are being used to produce consumer goods for sale to governmental agencies and to the public; and

WHEREAS, the use of prison labor has been supported as a training program for future work outside of the prison system, a rewards method for controlling prisoners, and as a way to instill self-respect and a work ethic in prisoners; and

WHEREAS, although those goals may be laudable, they should be balanced against the effect prison industries have on private businesses which must compete with those industries; and

WHEREAS, competition against these industries is very difficult, especially for small businesses, because the government, be it state or federal, is often required to purchase goods from prison industries instead of using the competitive bidding system; and

WHEREAS, problems have recently come to light in Virginia which highlight the dangers of an unbalanced competitive market and its adverse impact on private companies in competition with prison industries, private companies contracting for goods and services with prison industries, and consumers who are, more often than not, state agencies and institutions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study prison industries in Virginia. In addition, the joint subcommittee shall study the laws involving such industries as exceptions to the competitive bidding process. The joint subcommittee shall consist of 7 members to be appointed as follows: 4 members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House in accordance with the principles of Rule 16 of the Rules of the House of Delegates; and 3 members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$5,250.

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 2000 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.

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