

# 1999 SESSION

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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 740

Offered January 21, 1999

*Requesting the Department of Education to study whether reports of school violence should be available to parents.*

Patrons—Tata, Black, Bloxom, Councill, McClure, Melvin, Puller, Purkey, Reid, Shuler and Wardrup

Referred to Committee on Education

WHEREAS, school violence has reached national proportions, and the victims and perpetrators are younger than ever before; and

WHEREAS, concern about school violence is evident in media coverage of such events, and the efforts of states and the federal government to gain control over the problem; and

WHEREAS, many states, including Virginia, continue to study the issues and factors which contribute to school violence, and have established mechanisms for monitoring and reporting incidents of school violence; and

WHEREAS, unfortunately, incidents of school violence occur in schools across the Commonwealth every day, and principals are required to report certain crimes and acts of violence to division superintendents, who report such findings and data to the Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's school violence and safety report is released annually to the public; and

WHEREAS, parents are very concerned about school safety and whether their children are in an atmosphere free of violence, and that the school climate is conducive to learning and the reinforcement of values learned at home; and

WHEREAS, there is disagreement about what and how much information about schools should be released, particularly about school violence to parents; and

WHEREAS, parents instinctively seek to protect their children from hurt, harm, and danger, and many of them believe that they must have information about the incidents of school violence to determine the best educational setting for their children; and

WHEREAS, although school violence and safety information is widely available, consideration should be given to the need to inform parents monthly concerning incidents of school violence which occur at their children's school; and

WHEREAS, providing parents with such information may help the education community seize control of the problem and restore order to the schools; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Education be requested to study whether reports of school violence should be available to parents. In conducting the study, the Department shall (i) evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of providing parents monthly information on acts of school crime which occurred at their child's school, (ii) determine whether parents have a legal right to such information, (iii) estimate the costs of providing parents such information, and (iv) determine and develop a plan for handling parents' complaints regarding such reports, and for involving them in the resolution of the problems.

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

The Department of Education 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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