

991378836

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 378

Offered January 19, 1999

Requesting the Virginia State Police to study the accuracy of local arrest reports on runaway juveniles.

Patrons—Miller, Y.B., Forbes, Hawkins and Houck; Delegates: Albo, Armstrong, Cantor, Darner, Hamilton, Jackson, Jones, J.C. and McDonnell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the number of teenage runaways, as measured by the number of runaway arrests, increased in Virginia by 25 percent to 5,675 between 1991 and 1996; and

WHEREAS, according to the 1997 Virginia State Police's Uniform Crime Report, there were a total 5,675 juveniles who were arrested for running away in 1997; and

WHEREAS, local law enforcement is often the first point of contact for runaways to return home and receive services for reunification with their families; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Criminal Justice Services provides training to local law enforcement in the proper procedures for taking runaways into custody and determining service referrals; and

WHEREAS, teenage runaways often present a myriad of service needs such as health care, education, housing and counseling; and

WHEREAS, the 1997 Uniform Crime Report data showed a disparity among localities in the number of reported runaway arrests — only 15 runaway arrests reported in Fairfax County and nine in Virginia Beach compared to 645 arrests in Roanoke and 99 in the City of Waynesboro —suggesting that arrest information is not gathered in a systematic manner; and

WHEREAS, in order for communities to develop strategies to respond to the needs of this client population, reliable statistics on the incidence of runaways is required; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia State Police be requested to study the accuracy of local arrest reports on runaway juveniles. The Virginia State Police shall develop recommendations for the improvement of the statewide collection and reporting of arrest rates on runaways and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth by December 1, 1999.

Upon request, all agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Virginia State Police for this study.

The Virginia State Police 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.

INTRODUCED

SJ378