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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 459
AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the House Committee on Rules
on February 22, 1999)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Hawkins)

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education to study the need for a college in South-central Virginia.

WHEREAS, since Colonial days, Virginians have demonstrated a "thirst for knowledge and a reverence for learning," which resulted in the establishment of schools and universities in the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Jefferson is credited with developing Virginia's plan for a system of public education, which provided for elementary schools, general or secondary schools, and a university; and

WHEREAS, with the establishment of the College of William and Mary in 1624 by the crown of England, and with the enactment of legislation appropriating funds for the University of Virginia in February 1818, Virginia was well on its way to creating a high quality and effective system of higher education composed of state-supported colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, today, Virginia's system of higher education includes public and private two- and four-year, comprehensive and doctoral institutions which offer a range of fields and disciplines from the associate degree to the post-doctoral level, and educational opportunities in the professional schools; and

WHEREAS, it has been the long-standing goal of the Commonwealth to ensure that opportunities for higher education are accessible and available to all citizens in the most practicable, feasible, and cost-efficient manner; and

WHEREAS, although the South-central region of the Commonwealth is served by the community college system, there also is the need for a comprehensive or doctoral institution which could be easily accessed by citizens in the area; and

WHEREAS, the location of a comprehensive or doctoral institution in South-central Virginia would facilitate economic development, foster community growth, promote the appreciation of the cultural and historical significance of the region and enhance educational opportunities for all citizens through partnerships with public schools, business, government, and other local, state, and federal entities; and

WHEREAS, the costs of providing access to the advantages and benefits of a comprehensive or doctoral institution in South-central Virginia need not be prohibitive, as such educational services could be provided on a regional basis; and

WHEREAS, the State of Florida has explored the regional university concept to provide greater access to college degree programs in its unserved areas, and the design and approach of Florida and other states in this regard should be considered; and

WHEREAS, establishing a comprehensive or doctoral institution in the South-central area would complement Virginia's fine tradition and is consistent with the Commonwealth's legacy and vision to ensure the "broadest diffusion of knowledge"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education be requested to study the need for a college in South-central Virginia.

In conducting its study, the Council shall review the policies and procedures, if any, for the establishment of colleges in the Commonwealth, including accreditation. An analysis of the South-central region shall also be performed to determine the necessity of establishing a comprehensive or doctoral institution of higher education in the area. Such analysis shall include, but not be limited to, (i) regional demographic characteristics; (ii) level of education in the region, and high school and college graduation rates; (iii) status of economic development of the South-central region; (iv) availability of appropriate facilities, space, and grounds for the building or location of a college; (v) availability of qualified professors, instructors, administrators, and staff; (vi) disciplines which will be offered for study; (vii) types of degrees that will be conferred; (viii) characteristics of the potential pool of students; (ix) potential costs of establishing the college; (x) community and local government support for the college; (xi) consultation with the House Committee on Appropriations and other relevant entities regarding the establishment of a college; and (xi) such other issues as may be deemed necessary by the Council.

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

The State Council of Higher 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.

HOUSE SUBSTITUTE

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