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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 79

Offered January 9, 2008

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*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the feasibility of creating a dedicated revenue stream for teacher salaries. Report.*

Patron—Northam

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the teaching profession has been called "the most public of all the professions," and its ranks number over three million nationally; and

WHEREAS, although the teaching profession has been plagued by shortages, depressed salaries, and sometimes difficult working conditions, many agree that no other profession brings similar personal and professional rewards and satisfaction; and

WHEREAS, as increasingly complex technology and a fiercely competitive global workplace challenge our public education system to produce skilled and motivated graduates, teachers arguably remain one of the most important resources in the educational development of Virginia's children; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission on Excellence in Education recognized in 1986 that teacher compensation must be "competitive in the marketplace" and recommended the establishment of guidelines for teacher compensation and a biennial review by the Department of Personnel and Training (DPT); and

WHEREAS, the 1987 General Assembly acted on these recommendations, codifying the biennial review requirement and stating that "it is a goal of the Commonwealth that its public school teachers be compensated at a rate that is competitive in order to attract and keep competent teachers"; and

WHEREAS, because the quality of public education is dependent in large part upon the quality of its teaching personnel, competitive salaries for Virginia's teachers may enhance the recruitment and retention of the most qualified instructional personnel; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Education Association, "the average Virginia teacher earned \$44,727 in the 2006-2007 school year, which is 31st in the country and about \$6,000 below the national average"; and

WHEREAS, the National Education Association reported in its Rankings and Estimates: Rankings of the States 2006 and Estimates of School Statistics 2007 that "the average one-year increase in public schoolteacher salaries was 2.9 percent, while inflation escalated 3.9 percent, and over the past 10 years, the average salary for public schoolteachers increased only 1.3 percent after adjusting for inflation, and inflation and other economic factors have contributed to the inability of teachers to keep pace with basic household expenses"; and

WHEREAS, each year, many excellent veteran teachers leave the profession due to low salaries, little professional support, poor working conditions, and impoverished schools to pursue careers in professions with higher salaries; and

WHEREAS, teachers are finding it increasingly difficult to find affordable housing in their communities, pay off student loan debts, and provide for their families with current salary earnings; and

WHEREAS, with limited resources, competing obligations, and the demand for essential services, states and localities are severely challenged to increase teacher salaries without a identifiable and steady source of revenue; and

WHEREAS, creating a dedicated revenue stream may enable the Commonwealth to increase teacher salaries to a competitive level with other states, furthering Virginia's ability to recruit and retain excellent teachers; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the feasibility of creating a dedicated revenue stream for teacher salaries. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of nine members that shall consist of six legislative members, two nonlegislative citizen members, and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates in accordance with the principles of proportional representation contained in the Rules of the House of Delegates; two members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; one nonlegislative citizen members who shall represent the Virginia Education Association, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and one nonlegislative citizen member, who shall represent the Virginia School Boards Association, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges.

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59 Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of  
60 Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint subcommittee and the  
61 respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and  
62 ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion  
63 joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.  
64 The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall  
65 be members of the General Assembly.

66 In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall examine the salary levels of beginning and  
67 veteran teachers in Virginia, review methods and initiatives employed by other states to increase and  
68 maintain competitive teacher salaries, and evaluate the feasibility of and identify appropriate sources for  
69 creating a dedicated revenue stream to fund teacher salaries.

70 Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the Senate. Legal,  
71 research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by  
72 the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department of  
73 Education and the staffs of the House Committee on Appropriations and the Senate Committee on  
74 Finance. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this  
75 study, upon request.

76 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2008 interim, and the direct costs of  
77 this study shall not exceed \$6,920 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for  
78 unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the  
79 joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is  
80 agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

81 No recommendation of the joint subcommittee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members  
82 or a majority of the Senate members appointed to the joint subcommittee (i) vote against the  
83 recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the  
84 joint subcommittee.

85 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2008, and the chairman shall  
86 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and  
87 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2009 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The  
88 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General  
89 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or  
90 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the  
91 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents  
92 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

93 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint  
94 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or  
95 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2008 interim.