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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 632

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled December 2, 2008

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the feasibility of adopting a "housing first" approach to human services and social policy in Virginia. Report.

Patron—Englin

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, homelessness is a serious social problem; and

WHEREAS, while some communities are beginning to see reductions in chronic homelessness, in many communities family homelessness is increasing at an explosive rate, and families with children are the fastest growing segment of this homeless population; and

WHEREAS, while it is often the result of interwoven systemic and personal problems, the primary cause of homelessness among families is the growing gap between housing costs and income; and

WHEREAS, families are forced to live in their cars, in garages, in other places unfit for human habitation or to move from place to place with their children, staying intermittently with friends and families; and

WHEREAS, for most of the past two decades, public and private solutions to homelessness have focused on providing homeless families with emergency shelter and transitional housing; and

WHEREAS, while the emergency shelter system and transitional housing programs do provide much needed assistance, families are more responsive to service interventions from a stable, permanent housing base; and

WHEREAS, for those families who do find permanent housing, many would benefit from a variety of supportive services to help them stabilize and be linked to community-based resources and services; and

WHEREAS, linkages to permanent housing, support services to retain housing, and coordination of resources and services available in the community at-large are indispensable to ending and preventing family homelessness; and

WHEREAS, in addition to providing more effective and efficient services and assistance to the target community, a housing first approach has been found in other states to save taxpayer money; and

WHEREAS, the use of this "housing first" approach to the state's human services and social policy may be extremely beneficial to Virginia's citizens; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the feasibility of adopting a "housing first" approach to human services and social policy in the Virginia.

In conducting its study, the Commission shall (i) review the linkage between permanent housing and access to human services provided at the federal, state, and local levels, (ii) estimate the potential financial savings to the Commonwealth of a "housing first" approach, and (iii) develop a model detailing how a "housing first" approach to human services and social policy could work in the Commonwealth.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission for this study, upon request.

The Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2009, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no later than the first day of the 2010 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the Commission intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

INTRODUCED

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