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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 666

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 12, 2009

Establishing a joint subcommittee to study public agency adoptions. Report.

Patron—Shannon

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, Virginia Performs reports that Virginia has the second lowest rate of public agency adoptions in the nation; and

WHEREAS, although the number of Virginia's public agency adoptions increased from 320 to 551 between 1995 and 2006, the national number of adoptions from public agencies more than doubled during this period; and

WHEREAS, from 1995 to 2006, the total number of children in foster care has remained relatively constant; and

WHEREAS, state government and state agencies can play an important role in promoting and facilitating public agency adoptions; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study public agency adoptions. The joint subcommittee shall have a total of 11 members, who shall consist of six legislative members, four 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; two nonlegislative citizen members with knowledge of and experience related to public agency adoptions or adoption generally to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and two nonlegislative citizen members with knowledge of and experience related to public agency adoptions or adoption generally to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Director of the Department of Social Services or his designee shall serve ex officio with voting. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint subcommittee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. The joint subcommittee shall elect from among its membership a chairman and vice-chairman, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall assess best management practices related to increasing the number of public agency adoptions and develop a strategy for increasing the rate of public agency adoptions in the Commonwealth. In doing so, the joint subcommittee shall (i) evaluate the current status of agency adoptions, including factors influencing the rate of adoptions, in the Commonwealth; (ii) identify and evaluate promising programs that have increased the rate of public agency adoptions in other states; and (iii) develop recommendations for development of a strategy to increase the number of public agency adoptions in the Commonwealth.

Administrative staff support shall be provided by the Office of the Clerk of the House of Delegates. Legal, research, policy analysis, and other services as requested by the joint subcommittee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint subcommittee for this study, upon request.

The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2009 interim, and the direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$8,000 without approval as set out in this resolution. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the Chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk, nonlegislative citizen members shall be reimbursed only for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the Chairman of the joint subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

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

The joint subcommittee 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

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59 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General
60 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or
61 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the
62 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents
63 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

64 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint
65 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or
66 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2009 interim.
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