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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 641

Offered January 12, 2011

Prefiled January 12, 2011

*Establishing a joint subcommittee to study the efficacy and appropriateness of requiring full-day kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Patrons—Filler-Corn, Albo, Herring, Kory, Plum, Scott, J.M., Surovell and Watts; Senator: Barker

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, a majority of children begin their formal education with the entrance into kindergarten where they develop basic skills and knowledge through creative play, social interaction, and developmentally appropriate formal instruction; and

WHEREAS, kindergarten also provides opportunities for young children to learn how to share, follow instructions, wait, and work in a team and within boundaries, and it fosters the development of cognitive, social, and emotional skills; and

WHEREAS, kindergarten is the gateway to the elementary school grades and prepares children for more formalized and structured academic settings; and

WHEREAS, half-day kindergarten represents the traditional model for kindergarten; however, in response to fundamental changes in American society, including a shift in demographics, economic conditions, and a broadened conceptualization of education, kindergarten has evolved into a full-day program in several school divisions; and

WHEREAS, across the nation and in Virginia, the half-day versus full-day kindergarten program debate has persisted throughout the years without the realization of a solution and the research is divided over the benefits of both program formats; and

WHEREAS, proponents of the half-day kindergarten program indicate that the half-day format provides the same high quality education and social experiences while orienting young children to school, without the stress and rigors of a full-day kindergarten program; and

WHEREAS, advocates of the full-day kindergarten program purport that the full-day format provides greater opportunity for a variety of learning experiences and socialization, and for screening and assessment to detect potential problems that may compromise learning; and

WHEREAS, increasingly, education reform efforts site high quality full-day kindergarten among the strategies designed to promote school readiness and to address the academic achievement gap; and

WHEREAS, it is believed that quality preschool programs provide the foundation for children's lifelong learning and success in later grades, and that full-day kindergarten can help sustain these early educational gains; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That a joint subcommittee be established to study the efficacy and appropriateness of requiring full-day kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth. The joint subcommittee shall have a total membership of nine members that shall consist of eight legislative members and one ex officio member. Members shall be appointed as follows: five 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 and three members of the Senate to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules. The Superintendent of Public Instruction or her designee shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. The joint subcommittee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership, who shall be members of the General Assembly.

In conducting its study, the joint subcommittee shall (i) examine current kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth, noting the number of half-day and full-day kindergarten programs, pursuant to the provisions of § 22.1-199 of the Code of Virginia; (ii) determine the age appropriateness of curriculum and support programs; (iii) determine the number of four-year-olds enrolled in kindergarten programs and evaluate the efficacy of enrolling students before their fifth birthday; (iv) project the public school enrollment of students eligible for kindergarten over the next four years and evaluate the need for teachers, space, and other facilities to accommodate the current and anticipated enrollment; (v) determine the ability of half-day kindergarten programs to sustain the educational gains of at-risk students who have previously benefitted from full-day state-funded preschool initiatives; (vi) assess the effect of requiring full-day kindergarten programs on staff, infrastructure, and scheduling requirements; (vii) consider the fiscal and policy implications of requiring full-day kindergarten programs in the Commonwealth; and (viii) submit any findings and recommendations that the joint subcommittee deems appropriate.

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

64 The joint subcommittee shall be limited to four meetings for the 2011 interim, and the direct costs of  
65 this study shall not exceed \$16,040 without approval as set out in this resolution. Of this amount an  
66 estimated \$1,000 is allocated for speakers, materials, and other resources. Approval for unbudgeted  
67 nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint  
68 subcommittee and the respective Clerk. If a companion joint resolution of the other chamber is agreed  
69 to, written authorization of both Clerks shall be required.

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

74 The joint subcommittee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2011, and the chairman shall  
75 submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and  
76 recommendations no later than the first day of the 2012 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The  
77 executive summary shall state whether the joint subcommittee intends to submit to the General  
78 Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or  
79 Senate document. The executive summary and the report shall be submitted as provided in the  
80 procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents  
81 and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

82 Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint  
83 Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or  
84 delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2011 interim.