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## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 56

Offered January 8, 2014

Prefiled January 7, 2014

*Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study and identify policy and funding options to expand the Virginia Preschool Initiative. Report.*

Patron—Edwards

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, quality early childhood education programs benefit all children, provide a sound basis for learning; and build knowledge, personal competence, confidence, and a sense of social responsibility; and

WHEREAS, ensuring access to quality preschool programs for three-year-olds and four-year-olds has proven to be one of the soundest educational investments the public can make, providing demonstrated, significant, long-term reductions in the costs of special education, grade retention, welfare, and crime; and

WHEREAS, during kindergarten through twelfth grade and beyond, children who attended quality preschool programs perform better on standardized achievement tests in reading and math; exhibit more positive behaviors in the classroom; and are more likely to graduate from high school, continue their education, and become prosperous adults; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Preschool Initiative (the VPI) and Head Start serve approximately 33,000 children in Virginia; and

WHEREAS, this figure represents a small percentage of the children in Virginia who could benefit from preschool education; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study and identify policy and funding options to expand the Virginia Preschool Initiative.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) shall consider (i) incentives for localities that do not currently participate in the VPI; (ii) inclusion of three-year olds in the current program; (iii) summer programs; (iv) half-day and full-day programs; (v) universal preschool; (vi) options for mitigating associated costs with expansion, including parental fees; (vii) programs in other states; and (viii) any other related matters as JLARC deems appropriate to meet the objectives of this study.

Technical assistance shall be provided to JLARC by the Department of Education. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to JLARC for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2014, 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 2015 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether JLARC 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.

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