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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 630

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled January 9, 2017

Requesting the Department of Criminal Justice Services to study the efficacy of the sheriff of any locality supervising animal control officers. Report.

Patron—Bell, Robert B.

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, animal control officers are employed by localities for the purpose of enforcing Chapter 65 (§ 3.2-6500 et seq.) of Title 3.2 of the Code of Virginia, and all ordinances adopted pursuant to that chapter, and enforcing all laws for the protection of domestic animals; and

WHEREAS, animal control officers have duties, procedures, training, and equipment comparable to other members of local law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, currently there is inadequate accountability of animal control officers; and

WHEREAS, the sheriff's department of a locality is already equipped to handle many of the duties of animal control officers; and

WHEREAS, the reorganization of animal control officers into sheriffs' departments may be more cost effective for localities; and

WHEREAS, the reorganization of animal control officers into sheriffs' departments may result in better enforcement of the laws of Virginia and protection of domestic animals; and

WHEREAS, the reorganization of animal control officers into sheriffs' departments may cause significant financial burden for either party to the reorganization; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Department of Criminal Justice Services be requested to study the efficacy of the sheriff of any locality supervising animal control officers.

In conducting its study, the Department of Criminal Justice Services shall (i) at its discretion, consult animal control officers, local sheriffs, certified animal control officer training organizations, and any other party affected by the efficacy of the sheriff of any locality supervising animal control officers to determine the feasibility of including the supervision of animal control officers in sheriffs' departments' duties; (ii) assess the cost or savings to taxpayers that would result from such supervision restructuring; (iii) determine the effectiveness of sheriffs' departments in overseeing animal control officers in enforcing laws for the protection of domestic animals under such reorganization; and (iv) assess the cost to local sheriffs' departments that would result from such reorganization.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Department of Criminal Justice Services for this study, upon request.

The Department of Criminal Justice Services shall complete its study by November 30, 2017, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and 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 no later than the first day of the 2018 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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