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HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 217

Offered January 9, 2019

Directing the House Committees on Health, Welfare and Institutions and Militia and Police to establish a joint committee to study staffing levels, employment conditions, and compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections. Report.

Patrons—Tyler, Bell, John J., Hope, Kory, Lopez, Morefield, Murphy and Ward

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Virginia Department of Corrections to enhance public safety by providing effective programs and reentry services for the supervision of sentenced offenders in a humane, cost-effective manner, consistent with sound correctional principles and constitutional standards; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Corrections (the Department) aspires to be recognized as a model correctional agency and a proven innovative leader in the field; and

WHEREAS, the Commonwealth will be a safer place to live and work if the Department provides appropriate custody and supervision of, and programs and reentry practices for, offenders through its exemplary services; and

WHEREAS, the cornerstone of the Department is its employees, who embrace a common purpose and a commitment to the highest professional standards and excellence in public service; and

WHEREAS, the Department should maintain a responsible commitment to its employees and be a satisfying, rewarding, and safe place to work and grow professionally; and

WHEREAS, adequate staffing is critical to the Department's ability to fulfill its mission; and

WHEREAS, inadequate staffing levels can lead to lapses in safety and can place employees under extreme stress and at risk of other negative effects on their health; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, That a joint committee of the House Committees on Health, Welfare and Institutions and Militia and Police be established to study staffing levels, employment conditions, and compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections. The joint committee shall have a total membership of nine members that shall consist of five legislative members and four nonlegislative citizen members. Members shall be appointed as follows: two members of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions; three members of the House Committee on Militia and Police to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates upon the recommendation of the Chairman of the House Committee on Militia and Police; and four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, of whom two members shall be representatives of an association for correctional officers or employees and two members shall be former correctional officers or employees. Nonlegislative citizen members of the joint committee shall be citizens of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Unless otherwise approved in writing by the chairman of the joint committee and the Clerk of the House of Delegates, nonlegislative citizen members shall only be reimbursed for travel originating and ending within the Commonwealth of Virginia for the purpose of attending meetings. The joint committee shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership.

In conducting its study, the joint committee shall study staffing levels, rates of staff turnover, employment conditions, employee health and safety, and employee compensation at the Department.

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 committee shall be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall be provided by the Department. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the joint committee for this study, upon request.

The joint committee shall be limited to four meetings for this study during the 2019 interim. The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$14,200 without approval as set out in this resolution. Approval for unbudgeted nonmember-related expenses shall require the written authorization of the chairman of the joint committee and the Clerk of the House of Delegates.

The joint committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2019, 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 2020 Regular Session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall state whether the joint committee intends to submit to the General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House document.

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59 The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of
60 Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be
61 posted on the General Assembly's website.