

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 61

Continuing the Joint Committee of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions; the House Committee on Public Safety; the Senate Committee on the Judiciary; and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services Studying Staffing Levels, Employment Conditions, and Compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections. Report.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 11, 2022
Agreed to by the Senate, March 8, 2022

WHEREAS, House Joint Resolution No. 29 (2020) established the Joint Committee of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions; the House Committee on Public Safety; the Senate Committee on the Judiciary; and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services Studying Staffing Levels, Employment Conditions, and Compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections; and

WHEREAS, it is the mission of the Virginia Department of Corrections (the Department) 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 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, in order to fulfill its mission and serve as a model correctional agency, it must maintain adequate staffing levels and a responsible commitment to its employees to be a satisfying, rewarding, and safe place to work and grow professionally; and

WHEREAS, the joint committee was continued from the 2020 interim to the 2021 interim by House Joint Resolution No. 522 (2021, Special Session I) as it was unable to meet during the 2020 interim due to complications related to COVID-19 and the 2020 Special Session; and

WHEREAS, continuation of the joint committee's study will help to ensure that the Department has the strategies and resources necessary to ensure that these objectives are met; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Joint Committee of the House Committee on Health, Welfare and Institutions; the House Committee on Public Safety; the Senate Committee on the Judiciary; and the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services Studying Staffing Levels, Employment Conditions, and Compensation at the Virginia Department of Corrections be continued. 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 continue to 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 continue to be provided by the Division of Legislative Services. Technical assistance shall continue to 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 the 2022 interim, and 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 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 committee shall be adopted if a majority of the House members or a majority of the Senate members of the joint committee (i) vote against the recommendation and (ii) vote for the recommendation to fail notwithstanding the majority vote of the joint committee.

The joint committee shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2022, 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 2023 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 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.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may approve or disapprove expenditures for this study, extend or

delay the period for the conduct of the study, or authorize additional meetings during the 2022 interim.