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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 263**

House Amendments in [ ] — February 11, 1994

*Requesting the Governor by Executive Order to establish an Interagency Immigrant and Refugee Policy*  
 [ ~~council~~ Committee ] .

Patrons—Darner, Mayer, Tata and Van Landingham; Senators: Calhoun and Howell

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the United States has always prided itself on taking care of those less fortunate and providing haven for the weak and persecuted; and

WHEREAS, immigrants have come to our shores from the beginning, all foreign born, looking for an opportunity to create a safer and better life for themselves and their families, and this country has benefited from the great contribution made by persons of foreign ancestry; and

WHEREAS, the influx of immigrants into this country during the past decade rivals that at the turn of the century, but the motives remain the same; and

WHEREAS, Virginia ranks eighth in the nation with regard to the number of immigrants who settle in the United States; and

WHEREAS, while the federal government sets immigration policy and determines on a yearly basis how many newcomers will enter the country; and

WHEREAS, it sets policy about what social and other services will be provided to these newcomers, it has not kept its promises; and

WHEREAS, even though the federal government has accepted the moral obligation to reimburse states for these services to newcomers, it has continued to reduce its financial contributions to this partnership; and

WHEREAS, as a result, the states are picking up the burden for the provision of services to newcomers and the provision of programs under increasing federal mandates; and

WHEREAS, the cost of these services is increasing due to the multiplicity and specialized nature of the services needed; and

WHEREAS, these services cut across all state agencies and need to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion which envisions a more streamlined approach in dealing with the needs of newcomers with less duplication and a more consistent policy; and

WHEREAS, to do so would require interagency cooperation and agreement which currently exists but in no formalized manner; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Needs of Foreign-Born Individuals in the Commonwealth has spent two years studying the various problems of the foreign-born, of which there are many, and has traveled the state to talk to individuals from other countries who ask only for a chance to succeed; and

WHEREAS, the joint subcommittee recognizes that the need for services to address the needs of this population are complex and ongoing and require constant attention from the agencies responsible for the direct provision of services; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Governor of Virginia is requested to issue an executive order creating the Interagency Immigrant and Refugee Policy Committee. The joint subcommittee recommends that the responsibilities of the committee include, but not be limited to (i) review of current state and federal statutes, rules and policies applicable to immigrants, refugees, and undocumented aliens in order to eliminate duplication and provide more efficient and effective enforcement within existing resources; (ii) examine the delivery of state, federal and private programs to evaluate how they complement or juxtapose each other, (iii) establish and implement policy and coordinate enforcement and provide assistance in accordance with state and federal law, (iv) discuss and communicate problems and concerns that exist among state agencies, immigrants, and other associations or organizations which may have an interest in this program, and (v) provide an annual report to the Governor on the Committee's activities to include a specific review of the problems and potential solutions to those problems.

The Virginia Interagency Immigrant and Refugee Policy Committee should be composed of the following state officials or their designees: the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Commissioner of the Department of Social Services, the Commissioner of the Department of Health, the Secretary of Education, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry, the Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services,

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60 and any others deemed appropriate. The Committee should be chaired by the Secretary of Health and  
61 Human Resources.

62 The Committee is requested to work closely with the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Needs of  
63 Foreign-Born Individuals in the Commonwealth and to prepare a report outlining its goals and work for  
64 presentation to the Joint Subcommittee by December 1, 1994.