

1996 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 228

Offered January 22, 1996

Requesting public schools and public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia to recognize American Sign Language coursework for foreign language credit.

Patrons—Dillard, Albo, Almand, Darner, Hamilton, Katzen, Orrock, Parrish and Phillips; Senator: Gartlan

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, the unique social, cultural, and linguistic heritage of the deaf community and its substantial contribution to the enrichment and diversity of our society is recognized; and

WHEREAS, over the last twenty years, a significant and growing body of scientific inquiry of American Sign Language (ASL) has been undertaken with the result that ASL is now generally recognized as a separate and complete language with its own unique grammar and syntax; and

WHEREAS, ASL is the third most used language in the United States, other than English, and there is a significant and growing interest by the general public in learning ASL; and

WHEREAS, the legislative bodies of eleven states have formally recognized ASL; and

WHEREAS, thirteen states accept ASL coursework for foreign language credit throughout their state educational system, kindergarten through college; and

WHEREAS, learning and communicating with ASL contributes to a greater understanding of the social and cultural aspects of deafness, the promotion of better communication between hearing people and deaf people, and the advancement of the full inclusion and participation of deaf people and other persons with disabling conditions in every area of society; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That public schools and public and private institutions of higher education in Virginia be requested to recognize American Sign Language coursework for foreign language credit. The Board of Education and the State Council of Higher Education are requested to confer and collaborate in providing for the inclusion of American Sign Language among the foreign language courses approved for foreign language credit for the high school diploma, and determining ways and incentives in which public and private institutions of higher education might be encouraged to accept successfully completed coursework in American Sign Language for foreign language credit; now, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates shall transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and the Chairman and the Director of the State Council of Higher Education, requesting that they send a copy of this resolution to each local school board and the governing bodies, presidents, appropriate deans, and admissions officers of public and private institutions of higher education so that they may be apprised of the sense of this body.

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