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SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 294

Offered January 17, 1997

Continuing the Commission on Federal Block Grant Programs.

Patron—Gartlan

Referred to the Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, anticipating that the 104th Congress was likely to consolidate various federal categorical aid programs into block grants to be administered by the states, the 1996 Session of the General Assembly established the Commission on Federal Block Grant Programs (SJR 84) to oversee plans for implementation and to consider (i) the services to be delivered and the eligibility requirements for Virginia's block grant programs; (ii) the fiscal impact of block grant programs on state agencies, local governments, and private and non-profit service providers; and (iii) any necessary changes to administrative and financial processes to ensure the availability of information while minimizing administrative costs; and

WHEREAS, block grants were proposed for Medicaid, Food Stamps, and Work Force and Development Training Programs, the 104th Congress only acted on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and child care, creating a new block grant, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), to replace AFDC and to consolidate all federal funding for child day care under the Child Care and Development Block Grant; and

WHEREAS, on August 22, 1996, President Clinton signed into law the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 which, in addition to creating the new block grant and consolidating child day care funding, made sweeping changes in Food Stamp and Supplemental Security Income eligibility, benefits for legal immigrants, and child support enforcement requirements; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's plan for the new TANF block grant was submitted to the federal government in December of 1996 and is based on the Virginia Independence Program and the Virginia Initiative for Employment Not Welfare, passed by the 1995 session of the General Assembly; and

WHEREAS, although the Commission heard presentations from and posed questions to the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and representatives of local governments, additional discussion and legislative oversight are needed to study the remaining options, monitor the continued development, and analyze the effects and proposed amendments to the TANF state plan; and

WHEREAS, the 105th Congress is likely to receive new proposals to consolidate other human services programs into block grants, possibly requiring changes in state and local administration of those programs; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Commission on Federal Block Grant Programs be continued to provide legislative oversight and approval of any proposed amendments to the TANF state plan as submitted to the Secretary of Health and Human Services in December of 1996, pursuant to Title 1, section 402 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and to serve as a forum for public discussion, information, and analysis concerning any future consolidation of federal categorical aid programs. To enable the Commission to fulfill its charge, the staffs of the Division of Legislative Services and the Senate Committee on Finance and House Committee on Appropriations shall participate in the development of any proposed amendments to the TANF state plan. The members duly appointed pursuant to Senate Joint Resolution No. 84 (1996) shall continue to serve, except that any vacancies shall be filled as provided in the enabling resolution.

Staffing for the Commission shall continue to be provided by the Division of Legislative Services with technical assistance from the staffs of the Senate Committee on Finance and the House Committee on Appropriations, the Commission on Local Government and, upon request, the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The direct costs of this study shall not exceed \$16,500.

The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1998 Session of the General Assembly as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by the Joint Rules Committee. The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period for the conduct of the study.

INTRODUCED

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