

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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1996 Regular Session
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By: Delegate Rawlings

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 1996

Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Newspapers - Political Endorsements - Disclosure**

3 FOR the purpose of encouraging newspapers that endorse political candidates in
4 statewide, countywide, or citywide elections to indicate whether the publisher of the
5 newspaper influenced the endorsement.

6 WHEREAS, The First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States
7 guarantees freedom of speech; and

8 WHEREAS, It is the spirit of the First Amendment and essential to democracy that
9 citizens be informed; and

10 WHEREAS, Informed citizens participate more effectively in the democratic
11 process; and

12 WHEREAS, Newspapers are indispensable in keeping the public informed and
13 preserving First Amendment rights; and

14 WHEREAS, In addition to disseminating information, newspapers often provide
15 editorials for the purpose of influencing the public on issues of public importance; and

16 WHEREAS, Newspaper editorials often endorse certain political candidates; and

17 WHEREAS, The public believes that such endorsement expresses the views solely
18 of the editors of the newspaper; and

19 WHEREAS, The publisher of a newspaper may influence the decision of its editors
20 to endorse certain political candidates; and

21 WHEREAS, Newspapers have a responsibility to inform the public that the
22 publisher has influenced an editorial decision to endorse certain political candidates;
23 now, therefore, be it

24 **RESOLVED, BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the**
25 Maryland General Assembly encourages newspapers that endorse political candidates in
26 statewide, countywide, or citywide elections to indicate whether the publisher of the
27 newspaper influenced that decision; and be it further

28 **RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of**
29 Legislative Reference to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland; the

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- 1 Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and the
- 2 Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.