

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

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1997 Regular Session
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By: Delegates Klausmeier, D. Davis, Ports, Redmer, Mohorovic, Malone, DeCarlo, Finifter, Kach, Holt, McClenahan, Conway, M. Burns, Love, Stocksdale, Snodgrass, Krysiak, Hammen, Weir, and Nathan-Pulliam

Introduced and read first time: February 10, 1997
Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Graffiti**

3 FOR the purpose of urging local governments, businesses, and communities to support
4 the fight against graffiti in the State by taking certain measures; and generally
5 relating to graffiti.

6 WHEREAS, The incidence of graffiti vandalism in local communities is on the rise;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, The National Graffiti Information Network reports that graffiti costs
9 the nation \$4 billion a year; and

10 WHEREAS, The financial burden of cleaning up graffiti is an immediate expense
11 for localities and businesses and is a quick, but not a permanent, fix for the problem of
12 visual pollution; and

13 WHEREAS, The impact of graffiti on the quality of life in the community and the
14 well-being of citizens reveals itself as a direct threat that results in decreased property
15 values, an increase in antisocial crime, and a degradation in the quality of life; and

16 WHEREAS, The criminal justice system does not uniformly respond to graffiti
17 offenses because graffiti is seen as in the grey area between crime and public nuisance;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Community consensus views graffiti as a problem that should be
20 addressed quickly as graffiti creates an environment that allows more serious crime to
21 flourish; and

22 WHEREAS, The removal of Hip-Hop junk graffiti, gang graffiti, and tagging and
23 the restoration and protection of graffiti-prone areas are the best ways to deter further
24 vandalism; and

25 WHEREAS, Additional pro-active measures, including anti-graffiti laws that
26 require restitution, that prohibit possession of associated implements, that require
27 merchants to limit access to paints, and community outreach education programs are
28 being used across the country; and

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2

1 WHEREAS, Limited or restricted access to spray and other paints is accompanied
2 by controversy; and

3 WHEREAS, An estimated 8,000 cans of spray paint are used daily to deface
4 property nationwide; and

5 WHEREAS, Many states find success in educational outreach programs formed
6 between community-based organizations and governmental agencies; and

7 WHEREAS, Graffiti-related offenses are not pranks but serious offenses; and

8 WHEREAS, California and 8 other states have statutes that limit the ability of
9 minors to receive drivers' licenses by advancing the minimum age for a license by 1 year
10 per offense, thus emphasizing the consequences of graffiti as a juvenile offense; now,
11 therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That local
13 governments, businesses, and communities across the State are urged to take vigorous
14 efforts to combat graffiti and related vandalism; and be it further

15 RESOLVED, That local governments across the State are urged to fight graffiti by
16 enacting laws that, for a graffiti-related offense, require detention time, community
17 service hours, full restitution, mandatory counseling for offenders and their parents, and
18 civil sanctions; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That local governments across the State are urged to enlist businesses
20 and community organizations in the fight against graffiti; and be it further

21 RESOLVED, That graffiti-related offenses should be "zero-tolerance" offenses
22 with mandatory sanctions; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
24 Legislative Reference to the governing body of each local government in the State.