

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 4

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1998 Regular Session
8r1767
CF 8r1615

By: **Delegate Taylor**

Introduced and read first time: January 28, 1998

Assigned to: Commerce and Government Matters

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Special Study Commission on the Maryland Public Ethics Law**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Special Study Commission on the Maryland Public
4 Ethics Law; providing for the membership and staffing of the Commission;
5 specifying the duties of the Commission; requiring the Commission to report to
6 the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates on or
7 before a certain date; and generally relating to the Special Study Commission on
8 the Maryland Public Ethics Law.

9 WHEREAS, When the Maryland Public Ethics Law was enacted in 1979, the
10 General Assembly codified the ethics provisions of the House and Senate Rules; and

11 WHEREAS, For policy reasons, the General Assembly followed the text of the
12 House and Senate Rules provisions almost verbatim, making only stylistic changes;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, Since that time, various changes have been made to the General
15 Assembly portion of the Maryland Public Ethics Law; and

16 WHEREAS, The need has arisen to make a careful examination of the Maryland
17 Public Ethics Law as it relates to the General Assembly and its members; now,
18 therefore, be it

19 **RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That:**

20 (a) There is a Special Study Commission on the Maryland Public Ethics
21 Law.

22 (b) The Commission shall consist of the following 15 members:

23 (1) The majority leaders of the Senate of Maryland and the House
24 of Delegates;

25 (2) The minority leaders of the Senate of Maryland and the House
26 of Delegates;

27 (3) The co-chairmen of the Joint Committee on Legislative Ethics;
28 and

1 (4) Nine members of the general public, appointed jointly by the
2 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

3 (c) The chairman of the Commission shall be appointed jointly by the
4 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Delegates.

5 (d) The Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff for the
6 Commission.

7 (e) The Commission shall examine the Maryland Public Ethics Law as it
8 relates to the General Assembly and its members, including an examination of the
9 laws relating to:

10 (1) The relationship of members of the General Assembly with
11 businesses, lobbyists, and nonlegislative State agencies, boards, and commissions;

12 (2) The use of offices, staff, equipment, and resources provided to
13 members of the General Assembly by the State;

14 (3) The use of title and prestige of office for certain purposes;

15 (4) Conflict of interest, including employment with State agencies
16 and businesses with issues before the General Assembly;

17 (5) The disclosure of interests;

18 (6) The authority and powers of the Joint Committee on Legislative
19 Ethics; and

20 (7) Any other matters related to legislative ethics that the
21 Commission considers appropriate.

22 (f) The Commission shall review compliance with the "Guidelines for
23 Compensation and Expenses for Legislators" to better identify, monitor, and enforce
24 the appropriate standards for the use of public funds to pay legislative district office,
25 telephone, and other expenses of members of the General Assembly.

26 (g) The Commission shall make any recommendations for legislation
27 that it considers appropriate for introduction in the 1999 legislative session.

28 (h) The Commission shall issue a report of its findings and any
29 recommendations for legislation to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the
30 House of Delegates on or before February 1, 1999.