

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1

Unofficial Copy
P5

2000 Regular Session
0lr0722

(PRE-FILED)

By: **Delegate Elliott**
Requested: October 21, 1999
Introduced and read first time: January 12, 2000
Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION

1 A House Joint Resolution concerning

2 **Task Force on Legislative Focus**

3 FOR the purpose of establishing a Task Force on Legislative Focus to review efforts
4 by other states to manage and better focus on legislative workload; requiring the
5 Task Force to hold public hearings and consult with the legislatures of other
6 states and with national organizations; requiring the Task Force to submit a
7 report and make recommendations regarding legislative rule changes,
8 legislation, and constitutional amendments by a certain date; providing for the
9 membership and appointment of the Task Force; providing for reimbursement
10 for the members of the Task Force; terminating the Task Force on a certain date;
11 and generally relating to a Task Force on Legislative Focus.

12 WHEREAS, Over 9,000 bills have been introduced in the Maryland General
13 Assembly over the last four legislative sessions, approximately 5,600 in the House of
14 Delegates and 3,400 in the State Senate; and

15 WHEREAS, The time available to seriously study and understand all legislation
16 before the General Assembly diminishes in an inverse proportion to the number of
17 bills introduced; and

18 WHEREAS, Twenty-one chambers in the 50 legislatures across the country have
19 imposed a limit on the number of bills that a member may introduce or request to be
20 drafted; and

21 WHEREAS, While the Maryland General Assembly's deadline system for
22 consideration of legislation does provide some mechanism for moving legislation in a
23 timely manner, there remains every session a backlog of important proposals that
24 must be considered in the last few hours before adjournment sine die; and

25 WHEREAS, Some of the backlog faced at sine die could be eliminated by
26 allowing legislation to lay over between sessions in the same legislative term, as is
27 allowed by 43 state legislative chambers around the country; and

28 WHEREAS, Legislative time is often wasted by the need to completely redraft a
29 complicated proposal; and

1 WHEREAS, Thirteen legislative chambers around the country have confronted
2 the need to deal more expeditiously with complicated proposals by allowing the
3 introduction of "short form" bills that state the intended purpose of the legislation and
4 allow the substance to be added at a later date, after hearings are held and the
5 standing committee votes an initial consideration of the bill; and

6 WHEREAS, Thirty-seven legislative chambers have expedited the legislative
7 process by allowing the combination of several individual measures into a new
8 committee bill that moves forward in the same legislative session for consideration by
9 the full chamber and opposite house, thereby reducing the time needed to approve the
10 separate components of the combined measure; and

11 WHEREAS, As the workload of the Maryland General Assembly continues to
12 grow, and as we enter a new millennium, the time has come to find ways to
13 streamline the workload of the legislature and better focus the attention of the
14 General Assembly on the most important issues facing the State's citizenry; now,
15 therefore, be it

16 RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That there is a
17 Task Force on Legislative Focus; and be it further

18 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall review efforts by other states to manage
19 and better focus on the legislative workload before their legislatures, including
20 mechanisms that:

- 21 (1) limit the number of bills that may be introduced;
- 22 (2) allow the carry-over of bills between legislative sessions within a
23 4-year term;
- 24 (3) require that bills move to the opposite chamber earlier in the session
25 than is currently required under the Maryland General Assembly's system of
26 deadlines;
- 27 (4) permit the introduction of "short-form" bills that may later be
28 considered in fuller measure;
- 29 (5) allow the combination of several bills into a committee bill, which
30 moves forward on its own for consideration by the full chamber and the opposite
31 house; or
- 32 (6) take any other approach that would allow the Maryland General
33 Assembly to better manage and focus on the legislative issues important to the
34 citizens of Maryland; and be it further

35 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall hold public hearings and consult with
36 the legislatures of other states and with national organizations such as the National
37 Conference of State Legislatures; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall consider legislative rule changes,
2 legislation, and constitutional amendments to better enable the Maryland General
3 Assembly to manage and focus on the legislative issues important to the citizens of
4 Maryland; and be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall be composed of 15 members as follows:

6 (1) the President of the State Senate or an individual delegated by the
7 President;

8 (2) the Speaker of the House of Delegates or an individual delegated by
9 the Speaker;

10 (3) two chairmen of standing committees in the State Senate, appointed
11 by the President of the Senate;

12 (4) two chairmen of standing committees in the House of Delegates,
13 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates;

14 (5) the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the State Senate;

15 (6) the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the House of Delegates;

16 (7) one member of the minority party, who is a member of the House of
17 Delegates and who shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of
18 Delegates;

19 (8) one member of the minority party, who is a member of the State
20 Senate and who shall be appointed by the Minority Leader of the State Senate;

21 (9) one representative of the Governor of Maryland, who shall be
22 appointed by the Governor;

23 (10) one member of the academic community who is knowledgeable about
24 legislative processes around the country, and who is appointed jointly by the
25 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House; and

26 (11) one member of the academic community in Maryland, who is
27 knowledgeable about legislative processes around the country, and who is appointed
28 jointly by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House; and be it further

29 RESOLVED, That the chairman of the Task Force shall be the member of the
30 academic community in Maryland appointed jointly by the President of the Senate
31 and the Speaker of the House of Delegates; and be it further

32 RESOLVED, That the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of
33 Delegates shall appoint the two academic members of the Task Force, and the
34 chairman from among those members, on or before July 1, 2000; and be it further

35 RESOLVED, That the Governor shall appoint the representative of the
36 Governor on or before July 1, 2000; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That the Department of Legislative Services shall provide staff
2 support for the Task Force; and be it further

3 RESOLVED, That a member of the Task Force:

4 (1) may not receive compensation; but

5 (2) is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State
6 Travel Regulations as provided in the State budget; and be it further

7 RESOLVED, That on or before December 31, 2000, subject to § 2-1246 of the
8 State Government Article, the Task Force shall submit a report of its findings and
9 recommendations to the Legislative Policy Committee of the General Assembly; and
10 be it further

11 RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall terminate January 1, 2001; and be it
12 further

13 RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be forwarded by the Department of
14 Legislative Services to the Honorable Parris N. Glendening, Governor of Maryland;
15 the Honorable Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr., President of the Senate of Maryland; and
16 the Honorable Casper R. Taylor, Jr., Speaker of the House of Delegates.