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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 39

Offered January 10, 2024

Prefiled January 9, 2024

Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the feasibility of waiving tuition and mandatory fees for Virginia students who attend Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College. Report.

Patrons—Lopez, Clark, Henson and Simonds

Referred to Committee on Studies Subcommittee

WHEREAS, Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College offer high-quality postsecondary education opportunities in the southwest region of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, such comprehensive community colleges contribute economically, culturally, and intellectually to such region; and

WHEREAS, such comprehensive community colleges, the southwest region of the Commonwealth, and Virginia students throughout the Commonwealth would mutually benefit from expanded enrollment and educational opportunities at such colleges, which is likely to lead to increases in the number of graduates who live, work, and invest in the communities of such region; and

WHEREAS, one way to incentivize such expanded enrollment and educational opportunities would be for the State Board for Community Colleges to offer a waiver of tuition and mandatory fees for Virginia students who attend Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission be directed to study the feasibility of waiving tuition and mandatory fees for Virginia students who attend Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall analyze and consider (i) similar waivers within and outside of the Commonwealth, (ii) potential sources of funding to account for tuition and fee revenue lost by the respective comprehensive community colleges due to such waivers, (iii) the projected usage and impact of such waivers, and (iv) potential unintended consequences of such waivers.

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the Virginia Community College System and Mountain Empire Community College, Southwest Virginia Community College, and Virginia Highlands Community College. All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission for this study, upon request.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall complete its meetings by November 30, 2024, and shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an executive summary and a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House or Senate document. The executive summary and report shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports no later than the first day of the 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.

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