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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 468

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 13, 2025

*Directing the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission to study the cost efficiency of public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth and to identify opportunities to reduce the cost of public higher education in the Commonwealth. Report.*

Patron—Singh

Referred to Committee on Rules

WHEREAS, "Preparing for the Top Jobs of the 21st Century: The Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011" set a goal for public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of conferring approximately 100,000 cumulative additional undergraduate degrees on Virginians between 2011 and 2025; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to House Joint Resolution 108 (2012), the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission studied the cost efficiency of public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth and identified opportunities to reduce the cost of public higher education in the Commonwealth in its November 2014 report, *Addressing the Cost of Public Higher Education in Virginia*; and

WHEREAS, despite the recommendations contained in such report, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission reported in its *State Spending: 2023 Update* that tuition at baccalaureate public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth increased at an average annual rate of 4.4 percent between the 2012 fiscal year and the 2023 fiscal year, while inflation increased at an average annual rate of only 2.5 percent over such period; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission also reported in its *State Spending: 2023 Update* that the average tuition at baccalaureate public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth was \$14,649 in the 2023 fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the increasing costs of higher education have forced many students to incur significant debt in order to complete their degrees, with The Institute for College Access and Success reporting that the average student debt for 2020 graduates of baccalaureate institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth was \$29,616 and that 55 percent of such students graduated with debt related to their higher education; and

WHEREAS, the increasing costs of higher education and the growing debt burden for students may limit access to educational opportunities, adversely affect growth in other sectors of the economy of the Commonwealth, and be an obstacle to achieving the Commonwealth's undergraduate degree conferral goal; 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 cost efficiency of public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth and to identify opportunities to reduce the cost of public higher education in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission shall examine (i) the full range of costs for in-state tuition and room and board at each public institution of higher education; (ii) the amount of funding appropriated to each public institution of higher education over time; (iii) administrative staffing and costs, including the ratio of administrators to students at each public institution of higher education; (iv) the availability of scholarships and other student aid programs; (v) the impact of nonacademic activities and programs on tuition and fees; (vi) sources of revenue and income, and how these sources are allocated toward academic, administrative, and other costs; (vii) the relationship of each public institution of higher education to each of its associated foundations and the amount of funds held by each such foundation that are spent to hold down the cost of education to students; (viii) opportunities to reduce the cost of public higher education in the Commonwealth; and (ix) such other related matters as it may deem appropriate, and shall provide a comprehensive update on the status of the implementation of its recommendations pursuant to House Joint Resolution 108 (2012).

Technical assistance shall be provided to the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and each public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth. 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 for the first year by November 30, 2025, and for the second year by November 30, 2026, and the chairman shall submit to the Division of Legislative Automated Systems an executive summary of its findings and recommendations no

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59 later than the first day of the next Regular Session of the General Assembly for each year. Each executive  
60 summary shall state whether the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission intends to submit to the  
61 General Assembly and the Governor a report of its findings and recommendations for publication as a House  
62 or Senate document. The executive summaries and reports shall be submitted as provided in the procedures of  
63 the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and  
64 shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.