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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 49

Offered January 14, 2026

Requesting the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to study inclusive postsecondary education programs at public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth. Report.

Patron—Cohen

Committee Referral Pending

WHEREAS, inclusive postsecondary education programs at institutions of higher education allow students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) the opportunity to enroll in higher education programs alongside peers, and research shows that these programs demonstrate strong potential for improved life outcomes for such students; and

WHEREAS, out of the approximate 420,000 students with IDD across the United States, studies show that only two percent of those students choose to enroll in postsecondary education programs; and

WHEREAS, where inclusive postsecondary education programs exist, colleges and universities report only being able to enroll a small percentage of students who are eligible for enrollment in such programs due to staffing and budgetary constraints; and

WHEREAS, federal funding through the Transition and Postsecondary Education Programs for Students with Intellectual Disability (TPSID) has helped establish or expand programs at over 130 institutions, serving almost 5,000 students with IDD between 2010–2023, but recent federal budget cuts could negatively impact the continued availability of these programs; and

WHEREAS, approximately 74 percent of graduates of TPSID programs secure employment within a year of graduation from such programs, far exceeding the employment rate of the general IDD population; and

WHEREAS, as of 2022, inclusive postsecondary education programs exist at George Mason University, Longwood University, and Virginia Commonwealth University and at Bridgewater Community College, Laurel Ridge Community College, Mountain Gateway Community College, Northern Virginia Community College, and Reynolds Community College, but limited information exists on the availability of inclusive postsecondary education offerings, as well as limited data on enrollment in such existing programs, and what current data exists is not available or easily accessible in one central location or report; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia be requested to study inclusive postsecondary education programs at public institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth.

In conducting its study, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV), in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including representatives from public institutions of higher education, public secondary schools, disability advocacy organizations in the Commonwealth, the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and subject matter experts, shall (i) study the needs of the individuals who would benefit from improvements to or increased offerings of inclusive postsecondary education programs at public institutions of higher education; (ii) identify barriers to improving or increasing offerings of inclusive postsecondary education programs at public institutions of higher education, including any breakdowns in or a lack of interagency collaboration and inadequate funding for such programs; (iii) evaluate methods for consistent statewide data collection on student enrollment, completion, and employment outcomes for all students enrolled in inclusive postsecondary education programs; and (iv) provide recommendations for current program enhancements, the creation of new programming at public institutions of higher education, and possible methods to expand informational outreach to families in the Commonwealth.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to SCHEV for this study, upon request.

SCHEV shall submit to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education and Health a report of its findings and recommendations no later than December 1, 2026.

INTRODUCED

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