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HOUSE BILL NO. 595

Offered January 12, 2022

Prefiled January 11, 2022

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 4.5, consisting of a section numbered 2.2-450, relating to Special Assistant to the Governor for Disability Rights Advocacy; position created; report.

Patrons—Krizek, Adams, D.M., Clark, Hope, Jenkins, Keam, Maldonado, Plum, Simon, Simonds, Subramanyam and Watts

Committee Referral Pending

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 2.2 a chapter numbered 4.5, consisting of a section numbered 2.2-450, as follows:

CHAPTER 4.5.**SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS ADVOCACY.****§ 2.2-450. Special Assistant to the Governor for Disability Rights Advocacy; duties; report.**

A. The position of Special Assistant to the Governor for Disability Rights Advocacy (the Special Assistant) is created. The Special Assistant shall represent Virginians with disabilities in a comprehensive and authoritative manner by ensuring that all state agencies provide adequate services, resources, and accommodations to such persons.

B. In consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities created pursuant to § 51.5-31, the Special Assistant shall:

1. Identify and advise the Governor on recurring issues and problems within state agencies that impact people with disabilities;

2. Be responsible for collecting data and information from state agencies regarding compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (42 U.S.C. § 12101) and all other applicable federal, state, and local laws, and implementing a plan to address and remediate any unlawful activity and ensure continued compliance with such laws;

3. Develop reasonable and effective policy recommendations related to disability rights advocacy;

4. Represent the Governor in regards to any disability-related legislation being heard or acted upon during any regular or special session of the General Assembly;

5. Serve in an advisory capacity on any relevant board, council, commission, or similar entity;

6. Serve as a liaison between Virginians with disabilities and state agencies in order to promote the interests of such individuals and their right to receive adequate services, resources, and accommodations;

7. Perform other duties and responsibilities as requested by the Secretary of Health and Human Resources and the Governor; and

8. Submit an annual report to the Governor on or before December 1, through the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, that (i) outlines the key issues and problems discovered within state agencies that impact people with disabilities; (ii) identifies the details of any plan of action implemented by the Special Assistant to address and remediate such issues and problems; (iii) provides legislative recommendations that would improve processes and procedures across all state agencies with regard to the provision of services, resources, and accommodations to people with disabilities; and (iv) details such other matters as required by the Governor.

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