

Study Resolution

Review of the Commonwealth's Housing Needs

Authorized by the Commission on November 16, 2020

WHEREAS, access to affordable housing is a critical factor in Virginians' physical and behavioral health and their ability to achieve and maintain economic stability; and

WHEREAS, affordable housing is becoming more difficult for many individuals and families to acquire throughout all regions (suburban, urban, and rural) of the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, the high cost burden of housing, especially for lower-wage earners or those with special needs, is contributing to housing instability and homelessness; and

WHEREAS, between January and June of 2020 approximately 54,000 evictions were filed, more than 19,000 of those resulted in an eviction, and analysis by Virginia Commonwealth University estimated that up to 262,000 additional households are at risk of eviction; and

WHEREAS, multiple state and local agencies are involved in the provision of housing services and monitoring housing affordability and availability in Virginia; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) that staff be directed to review the Commonwealth's housing needs and the role of state and local governments in addressing them.

In conducting the study, staff shall (i) analyze rent burden across the Commonwealth and compare the demand for affordable housing statewide to its supply; (ii) identify the impacts of a lack of housing options and high rent burden on Virginians, especially those discriminated against based on their race and ethnicity or disadvantaged by their education, income, age, or physical or behavioral health needs; (iii) identify factors that limit the supply of housing, including zoning requirements; (iv) evaluate the importance of housing availability to state and local revenues and economic growth; (v) evaluate the effectiveness of state and local programs to address housing needs, especially for low- and moderate-income Virginians, Virginians who struggle with mental health conditions and substance abuse, Virginians who live in multi-family households, and elderly Virginians; and (vi) evaluate the adequacy of coordination between the various state and local agencies that have a role in housing policies and services.

JLARC shall make recommendations as necessary and review other issues as warranted.

All agencies of the Commonwealth, including the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Virginia Housing Development Authority, the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, the Department of Aging and Rehabilitative Services, and the Department of Social Services, shall provide assistance, information, and data to JLARC for this study, upon request. JLARC staff shall have access to all information in the possession of agencies pursuant to § 30-59 and § 30-69 of the Code of Virginia. No provision of the Code of Virginia shall be

interpreted as limiting or restricting the access of JLARC staff to information pursuant to its statutory authority.