

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2007

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 2203

Sponsors: Representatives Insko, Love, Glazier (Primary Sponsors); Alexander, Bryant, Carney, Coleman, Cotham, Earle, Faison, Farmer-Butterfield, Harrison, Luebke, McLawhorn, Parmon, Tarleton, Weiss, and Wiley.

Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

May 20, 2008

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH
2 COMMISSION TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF TUITION FORGIVENESS
3 AND OTHER INCENTIVES TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SOCIAL
4 WORKERS IN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH IN UNDERSERVED
5 COUNTIES IN NORTH CAROLINA.

6 Whereas, North Carolina's mental health system faces serious challenges,
7 among them a lack of a well-trained clinical workforce to provide adequate levels of
8 evidence-based care to our citizens, particularly in rural areas; and

9 Whereas, 35% of counties in North Carolina meet federal criteria for being
10 underserved by mental health professionals; and

11 Whereas, the State is investing heavily in the education of social work
12 professionals by supporting nine MSW programs at the public universities; and

13 Whereas, the dividends of the State's investment are not fully benefiting those
14 citizens most in need of mental health services, including 12% of children with serious
15 emotional disturbance, and 5.4% of adults with serious, debilitating mental illness;

16 Now, therefore,

17 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

18 **SECTION 1.(a)** The Legislative Research Commission may study the
19 feasibility of tuition forgiveness and other incentives to increase the number of social
20 workers in community mental health in underserved counties in North Carolina. In
21 conducting the study, the Commission may assess the feasibility of a Community
22 Mental Health Scholars Tuition Forgiveness Program ("Program") for the purpose of
23 expanding the number of professional master's level social workers in community
24 mental health to serve underserved counties. The Commission's study may also include
25 (i) identifying policy or system barriers to the creation of a tuition forgiveness program
26 or to hiring of graduates in underserved counties; (ii) recommending a structure for a
27 tuition forgiveness program if such a program is found feasible; and (iii) recommending

1 other possible incentives to increase the number of MSW social workers providing
2 community mental health services.

3 **SECTION 1.(b)** The Legislative Research Commission may make its report
4 to the 2007 General Assembly, Regular Session 2008.

5 **SECTION 2.** The Legislative Services Officer shall allocate funds
6 appropriated to the General Assembly for the expenditures of the Legislative Services
7 Commission in conducting this study.

8 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2008.