

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 11

BY SENATOR REESE AND REPRESENTATIVES BAGLEY, CARPENTER, CARRIER, WILFORD CARTER, DEVILLIER, EDMONSTON, EMERSON, FARNUM, FREEMAN, FREIBERG, GAINES, GREEN, JAMES, MIKE JOHNSON, JONES, JORDAN, LARVADAIN, MARINO, GREGORY MILLER, MOORE, NELSON, CHARLES OWEN, PIERRE, SCHAMERHORN, THOMPSON AND WHITE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request certain state agencies and private businesses in Louisiana to recognize the value that justice-involved persons can bring to the workforce and society and to act with intention to empower, train, and employ such individuals.

WHEREAS, the Justice Reinvestment Initiatives of 2017 and other criminal justice reforms should be maintained with a renewed focus on reentry to remove barriers to employment and to facilitate gainful employment for reentering citizens; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 261 of the 2017 Regular Session reinvested a portion of JRI savings back into reentry programming; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 226 of the 2020 Regular Session requires the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, to provide an identification card to those released listing all classes, certificates, and training obtained during incarceration; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 98 of the 2020 Regular Session requires probation and parole officers to make reasonable accommodations for probationers and parolees who are employed, including video check-in so employees do not have to leave work; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has contributed to an uncertain employment climate in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, justice-involved persons have unique employment challenges which are compounded by Louisiana's uncertain economic landscape; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana should not regress and cannot risk an increase in recidivism and crime rates if it wants to retain, grow, and attract business and talent; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative that Louisiana grows its workforce and its tax base; and

WHEREAS, hiring justice-involved persons reduces recidivism and crime rates.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby

urge and request:

(1) The Louisiana division of administration, Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, Louisiana Workforce Commission, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, and private businesses in the state of Louisiana recognize the value that justice-involved persons can bring to the workforce and society, and act with intention to empower, train, and employ such individuals.

(2) The people of Louisiana recognize that justice-involved persons are doing essential work in response to COVID-19; many justice-involved persons are essential workers responding to COVID-19.

(3) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, and the Louisiana Workforce Commission align on Job Skill Training programs provided by the Louisiana Community and Technical College System and Industry Based Certification Programs offered in the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, and prisons in order to remove licensing barriers or open pathways to licensure for justice-involved persons, both during and after incarceration.

(4) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, continues its work on Reentry Accountability Plans (ReAP), a result of the Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative (LA-PRI), which provides evidence-based guidance to the justice-involved person, corrections services staff, the courts, Parole Board, probation and parole, local jails, and community resource partners.

(5) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, continues working with community resource partners and utilizes technology to facilitate contact with prospective employers and incarcerated persons prior to their release.

(6) The allocation of state general fund dollars and JRI savings continue and expand the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, Reentry Initiatives and Programs in its facilities and incentivizes sheriffs with those local facilities with which it contracts to expand their reentry initiatives and evidence-based transitional employment programs to all state prisoners.

(7) The Louisiana Workforce Commission and Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, creates evidence-based transitional employment

opportunities for returning citizens and encourages connections between Louisiana businesses and reentry organizations through increased awareness of the commission's bonding capacity and tax credits for businesses which hire justice-involved persons.

(8) The Louisiana Workforce Commission partners with business trade organizations to increase awareness of incentives offered to businesses hiring justice-involved persons.

(9) Louisiana employers hire justice-involved persons who are referred by established reentry organizations.

(10) The division of administration to prioritize and seek to fund reentry initiatives with any future allotments of federal funding related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the governor of Louisiana, the commissioner of administration, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, and the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES