

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 10

BY SENATORS BARROW AND WALSWORTH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to study the feasibility of extending the age of foster care to twenty-one and to submit a report of its recommendations to the legislature no later than February 1, 2019.

WHEREAS, R.S. 36:477(B)(1) states that the office of children and family services shall provide for the public child welfare functions of the state, including but not limited to making permanent plans for foster children and meeting their daily maintenance needs of food, shelter, clothing, necessary physical medical services, school supplies, and incidental personal needs, and adoption placement services for foster children freed for adoption; and

WHEREAS, P.L. 110-351, The Fostering Connections to Success and Increasing Adoptions Act of 2008 (FCA) was signed into law on October 7, 2008, allowing states to receive federal Title IV-E reimbursement for costs associated with supports for young people to remain in foster care up to age twenty-one; and

WHEREAS, approximately twenty-five states and the District of Columbia have extended foster care beyond age eighteen under Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, as enacted by the FCA; and

WHEREAS, approximately twenty-six thousand youth who age out of foster care at age eighteen face significant challenges in meeting their healthcare, education, housing, employment, and emotional needs; and

WHEREAS, while twenty-five states currently extend foster care through FCA, a majority of states do allow for state-funded extended foster care, or extended services to youth beyond the age of eighteen, such as transitional living services, housing, and educational assistance; and

WHEREAS, national studies continue to document that one in four youth who age

out of foster care are homeless within one year after exiting the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, with the discontinuance of the young adult program in July 2013, youth in Louisiana age out of foster care at age eighteen, with little to no support from the state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Children and Family Services to study the feasibility of extending foster care to age twenty-one to youth in Louisiana and to submit a report of its findings and policy recommendations to the governor and legislature no later than February 1, 2019.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting this study, the Department of Children and Family Services shall convene a panel of experts to provide guidance on this matter that shall be comprised of the following members:

(1) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, or his designee.

(2) The assistant secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, division of child welfare, or his designee.

(3) A foster care supervisor or foster care worker within the Department of Children and Family Services, division of child welfare.

(4) The assistant secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, office of behavioral health, or his designee.

(5) The medicaid director of the Louisiana Department of Health, or his designee.

(6) The executive director of the Louisiana Housing Corporation, or his designee.

(7) The executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, or his designee.

(8) The state superintendent of education, or his designee.

(9) The executive director of the Children's Cabinet, or his designee.

(10) The executive director of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, or his designee.

(11) The executive director of the Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families, or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his designee shall serve as the chair of the panel and lead the study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Children and Family Services shall develop findings and recommendations concerning the costs and benefits of extending foster care to age twenty-one and the feasibility of implementation and shall submit its findings and recommendations in the form of a written report to the governor and legislature by February 1, 2019.

BE IT FURTHERED RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Department of Children and Family Services.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES