

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50

BY REPRESENTATIVE HARRISON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To direct the secretaries of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Children and Family Services to study the consolidation of the two departments into one department and to present a report on the findings and conclusions of such study to the legislature.

WHEREAS, Louisiana is facing a budget crisis requiring the offset of a projected \$1.6 billion revenue shortfall, and the legislature is currently in the process of carrying out the difficult task of determining those agencies and programs that must withstand severe funding cuts, while considering proposals for major changes in the way certain state functions are administered in order to achieve savings; and

WHEREAS, the governor has called for funding cuts and recommended privatizing certain state functions, while seeking ways to maintain key services and continue economic development efforts, all of which requires very close scrutiny of all state government operations with an eye toward economy and efficiency; and

WHEREAS, economy and efficiency in state government is one of the main objectives of the Executive Reorganization Act, enacted in response to a mandate of the Louisiana Constitution of 1974, which provides that its purpose is in part "to create a structure for the executive branch of state government which is responsive to the needs of the people of this state and which is sufficiently flexible to meet changing human and natural conditions; to promote economy and efficiency in the operation and management of state government, and to strengthen the executive capacity for effective, efficient, and economic administration at all levels...and to eliminate to the fullest practicable extent duplication of effort within the executive branch of state government in order to use wisely the funds of the

state and more conveniently to meet the needs of the citizens of Louisiana which are supported by revenues derived from the people and from the natural resources belonging to them"; and

WHEREAS, government reorganization for the purpose of further consolidation of government functions and elimination of duplication clearly constitutes one of the most obvious, and potentially one of the most effective, ways to support the ongoing work of the legislature and the governor in response to the current budget dilemma, and the Constitution of Louisiana grants the legislature responsibility for reallocation of offices, agencies, and other instrumentalities of the executive branch of state government and their functions, powers, duties, and responsibilities within not more than twenty departments; and

WHEREAS, primary candidates for such reorganization are the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Children and Family Services, for these departments, which administer the health and social services functions of state government, are major bureaucratic structures that serve many of the same clients and have closely related responsibilities and related eligibility and funding structures, and in fact the two departments were at one time a single larger department that also included the state's hospitals.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby authorize and request the secretaries of the Department of Health and Hospitals and the Department of Children and Family Services jointly to study the consolidation of the two departments into one department and to present a report on the findings and conclusions of such study to the legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such plan shall have the purposes of promoting economy and efficiency in the operation and management of the functions of the state relative to health and social services, strengthening the executive capacity of the new department for effective, efficient, and economic administration while also improving the quality of the functions performed and the programs and services rendered by the new department for the state's citizens, and eliminating to the fullest practicable extent duplication of effort within health and social services functions of state government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretaries shall conduct a comprehensive study and examination of the organization and operations of the two departments and such study shall include but not be limited to the merger of functions, abolition of agencies, consolidation of offices, elimination of job positions, elimination of duplication of functions, full implementation of an office of management and finance and consolidation of its functions, and efficiency and economy in delivery of services.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that such study shall include:

(1) A study of the organizational structures and the assignment of powers, duties, functions, responsibilities, and programs of the two departments and a review of those areas where there is an opportunity to achieve improved and efficient operation and management of the state's health and social services programs and functions.

(2) A report of the findings of the secretaries' comprehensive study and examination of the organization and operations of the two departments and any other explanatory material the secretaries determine to be necessary to explain the study.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretaries shall complete such study and submit it to the speaker of the House of Representatives, the president of the Senate, the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and the House Committee on Health and Welfare not later than December 31, 2011, and that a copy thereof shall be submitted to the governor and to the commissioner of administration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, the House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, and the House Committee on Health and Welfare, individually or jointly, may conduct such hearings as they deem appropriate to review the study and material submitted by the secretaries and that the secretaries shall furnish the committees any information they may request concerning reorganization of the departments and appear before any of the committees to provide such information as any of the committees may request.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable Bobby Jindal, Governor of Louisiana; Paul W. Rainwater, Commissioner of Administration; Bruce D. Greenstein, Secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals; and Ruth Johnson, Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE