

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 58

BY REPRESENTATIVES HILFERTY AND HUNTER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department of Health to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of implementing a "baby box" program as a means of reducing infant mortality, and to report findings of the evaluation to the legislative committees on health and welfare.

WHEREAS, in March of 2017, Alabama became the third U.S. state, after New Jersey and Ohio, to make free "baby boxes" available to the families of all newborns on a statewide basis; and

WHEREAS, the "baby box" distributed in these states is a sturdy cardboard box which doubles as a bassinet and comes with a firm foam mattress, a tight-fitting sheet, and breastfeeding accessories; and

WHEREAS, these baby box distribution initiatives are a variation of a program providing maternity packages in Finland which began approximately eighty years ago when that country suffered a postneonatal death rate of nearly ten percent; and

WHEREAS, Finland's infant mortality rate has dropped by over ninety-five percent in the past eight decades and is now one of the world's lowest; and

WHEREAS, by contrast, among the thirty-five nations that comprise the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United States ranks sixth-from-last (twenty-ninth) in infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, within the U.S., Louisiana has a particularly high rate of infant mortality; according to the 2016 America's Health Rankings report, at over eight infant deaths per one thousand live births, Louisiana's infant mortality rate ranks forty-eighth

among U.S. states and is nearly twice that of the state with the nation's lowest infant mortality rate (Massachusetts); and

WHEREAS, promoting safe sleep and reducing other risk factors for infant mortality have been longstanding priorities of the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department of Health, the child welfare division of the Department of Children and Family Services, and the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department of Health to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of implementing a "baby box" program of the type described in this Resolution as a means to promote safe sleep among families with newborns and thereby reduce infant mortality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting the evaluation requested in this Resolution, the bureau of family health shall engage, collaborate with, and obtain information and perspective from the child welfare division of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel, and any other stakeholder groups as deemed appropriate by the director of the bureau of family health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the bureau of family health shall submit a written report of its findings resulting from the evaluation requested in this Resolution to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, and the chairperson of the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE