SLS 19RS-533

2019 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 133

BY SENATOR GATTI

JUVENILES. Requests Senate Committee on Judiciary C and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to study solitary confinement of juveniles and implementation of mental health evaluations for juveniles prior to detention.

1	A RESOLUTION
2	To urge and request the Senate Committee on Judiciary C and the Department of Public
3	Safety and Corrections to study the practices of solitary confinement, isolation and
4	extended lock down of juveniles, and the feasibility of implementing of mental
5	health evaluations for juveniles prior to detention in juvenile facilities.
6	WHEREAS, Louisiana incarcerates more delinquent youth per capita than any other
7	state; and
8	WHEREAS, each of Louisiana's secured juvenile facilities exceed national standards
9	for facility size, creating safety and other issues and leaving such facilities ill-prepared to
10	ensure rehabilitation as defined by the American Correctional Association; and
11	WHEREAS, Louisiana's secured juvenile facilities still practice the use of solitary
12	confinement to control behavior; and
13	WHEREAS, solitary confinement requires substantial isolation of the delinquent
14	youth from other delinquent youth, and while in solitary confinement the youth's privileges
15	and social contact with others are limited; and
16	WHEREAS, research shows that experiencing solitary confinement can cause rage
17	and frustration and also lead to depression and anxiety, and thousands of juveniles are
18	subjected to solitary confinement every year; and

SLS 19RS-533

SR 133 Original

1	WHEREAS, research has further shown that solitary confinement exacerbates mental
2	health problems and may lead to suicide; and
3	WHEREAS, two laws were passed by Congress in 2018, the First Step Act and the
4	reauthorized Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, to help prohibit solitary
5	confinement in federal youth institutions; and
6	WHEREAS, on February 7, 2019, and February 9, 2019, two juveniles, ages 13 and
7	17, committed suicide at the Ware Youth Detention center within 72 hours while in solitary
8	confinement; and
9	WHEREAS, both juveniles were constituents of Senate District 36; and
10	WHEREAS, an investigative report by the Department of Child and Family Services
11	revealed the Ware Youth Detention Center committed several alarming infractions while the
12	juveniles were in solitary confinement, including but not limited to a delay in mandatory
13	mental health assessments, failure to check on residents at required times, and dangerous
14	parts of rooms that could assist a residents in committing suicide.
15	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
16	requests that the Senate Committee on Judiciary C and the Department of Public Safety and
17	Corrections study all aspects of solitary confinement in juvenile facilities, the abolishment
18	of solitary confinement in juvenile facilities, and the implementation of mental health
19	evaluations of a juvenile delinquent prior to solitary confinement.
20	THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be
21	submitted to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Xavier I. Alexander.

DIGEST 2019 Regular Session

Gatti

Requests the Senate Committee on Judiciary C and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to study all aspects of solitary confinement in juvenile facilities, and the implementation of mental health evaluations of a juvenile delinquent prior to solitary confinement.