



1 marital success rate higher than those who do not participate in premarital counseling; and

2 WHEREAS, the Family Court Review published 2011 research which revealed that  
3 couples already in the divorce process indicated that twenty-five percent of the time married  
4 parents of minor children believed that the marriage could be saved and more than thirty-  
5 three percent indicated that they had an interest in reconciling the marriage; and

6 WHEREAS, if premarital and pre-divorce counseling results in just a thirty-three  
7 percent reduction in divorce, a savings of about two hundred twenty-three million dollars  
8 each year would be saved by the taxpayers of the state of Louisiana; and

9 WHEREAS, also if premarital and pre-divorce counseling would result in just a  
10 thirty-three percent reduction in divorce, an estimated five thousand Louisiana children each  
11 year would be spared the devastation of a broken family, research shows children of divorce  
12 are more than double as likely as the children of intact biological families to suffer serious  
13 social, emotional, educational, behavioral, and psychological troubles; and

14 WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana has championed laws which support  
15 maintaining the intact family because current law mandates that couples with minor children  
16 must wait one year as a cooling-off period before a divorce is granted; and

17 WHEREAS, states have recognized the benefits of counseling, even if it is limited  
18 to parenting classes; some states, including Louisiana, give judges discretion to allow courts  
19 to order parenting classes for divorcing couples; and

20 WHEREAS, according to the National Healthy Marriages Resource Center, at least  
21 seven states (Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, and Texas)  
22 incentivize premarital counseling and the course lengths vary with a mix of communications,  
23 finances, family planning, expectations for the future, personal values, heritage, religion,  
24 roles, conflict resolution, and intimacy, and such state incentives also vary as to the course  
25 costs and economic incentives; and

26 WHEREAS, a task force is the best vehicle to study and make recommendations  
27 regarding legislation that incentivizes premarital counseling and pre-divorce counseling for  
28 couples with children, and both would serve as a means to protect children from the  
29 devastation of family fragmentation and as a means of directly impacting the state budget.

30 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana creates the Task

1 Force on Incentives for Premarital Counseling and Pre-Divorce Counseling to study possible  
2 incentives to promote premarital counseling and pre-divorce counseling and to make policy  
3 recommendations to the legislature.

4 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the task force shall be comprised of the  
5 following members:

6 (1) The president of the Senate, or his designee, who shall serve as chairman.

7 (2) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.

8 (3) The attorney general or his designee.

9 (4) The chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children or her  
10 designee.

11 (5) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or her designee.

12 (6) One member appointed by the Louisiana Baptist Convention, Office of Public  
13 Policy.

14 (7) One member appointed by the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Office of Marriage  
15 and Family Life.

16 (8) One member appointed by the Louisiana Family Forum.

17 (9) One member who is a family court judge or district court judge who has  
18 jurisdiction over divorce matters and who is appointed by the Louisiana District Judges  
19 Association.

20 (10) The legislative auditor, or his designee, who shall serve as a nonvoting member  
21 of the task force.

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that task force members shall serve without  
23 compensation or reimbursement of expense, other than what may be afforded by their  
24 appointing authority; legislative members of the task force shall receive the same per diem  
25 and reimbursement of travel expenses as provided for attendance at legislative committee  
26 meetings under the rules of the respective house in which they serve.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the names of the appointees and their designees  
28 to the task force shall be submitted to the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children  
29 by August 15, 2019.

30 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the membership of the task force

