

2021 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 242

BY SENATOR JACKSON

COURTS. Creates a task force to study the implementation and funding of mental health courts in Senate District No. 34.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 Creates the Task Force on Mental Health Courts to study the feasibility of implementing and
3 funding mental health courts in Senate District No. 34.

4 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance
5 provides funding for mental health courts through the Justice and Mental Health
6 Collaboration Program (JMHCP) which fund projects that enable communities to implement
7 innovative and collaborative efforts that will improve system-wide performance in
8 addressing the needs of adult offenders who have mental disabilities or illnesses; and

9 WHEREAS, the goal of mental health courts is to reduce the frequency of contact
10 between the client and the criminal justice system by providing courts with resources to
11 improve the client's social functioning and to connect the client to employment, housing,
12 treatment, and support services; and

13 WHEREAS, mental health courts aim to reduce the criminal recidivism of mentally
14 ill offenders and increase their participation in effective treatment by combining court
15 supervision with community-based treatment services, usually in lieu of a jail or prison
16 sentence; and

17 WHEREAS, research indicates that some participants in mental health courts have
18 lower rates of recidivism than individuals with mental illnesses processed through the

1 traditional criminal court system, and that this trend continues after individuals are no longer
2 under court supervision; and

3 WHEREAS, mental health courts have also been found to connect participants with
4 mental health treatment services more effectively than do the traditional court system and
5 jails, and have the potential to save money through reduced recidivism, associated savings
6 in jail and court costs, and reduced treatment by avoiding expensive inpatient care; and

7 WHEREAS, while mental health courts generally deal with nonviolent offenders who
8 have been diagnosed with a mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse
9 disorders, they are also designed to accept individuals charged with more serious offenses;
10 and

11 WHEREAS, there are more than 300 mental health courts in existence throughout
12 the United States with even more being planned; and

13 WHEREAS, mental health courts use incentives and sanctions tailored to the
14 circumstances and needs of each participant, and are typically composed of a judge, defense
15 attorney, prosecutor, probation/parole officer, and case managers and/or representatives from
16 the mental health system.

17 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
18 hereby creates the task force to study the feasibility of implementing and funding mental
19 health courts in Senate District No. 34.

20 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force to study the feasibility of
21 implementing and funding mental health courts in Senate District No. 34 will include the
22 following individuals:

- 23 (1) The senator for Senate District No. 34, or her designee.
- 24 (2) The district attorney for the Fourth Judicial District, or his designee.
- 25 (3) The district attorney for the Fifth Judicial District, or her designee.
- 26 (4) The district attorney for the Sixth Judicial District, or his designee.
- 27 (5) The district attorney for the Seventh Judicial District, or his designee.
- 28 (6) The sheriff of the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
- 29 (7) The sheriff of the Morehouse Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
- 30 (8) The sheriff of the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.

- 1 (9) The sheriff of the Madison Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
 - 2 (10) The sheriff of the East Carroll Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
 - 3 (11) The sheriff of the Tensas Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
 - 4 (12) The sheriff of the Concordia Parish Sheriff's Office, or his designee.
 - 5 (13) The chief judge for the Fourth Judicial District Court, or his designee.
 - 6 (14) The chief judge for the Fifth Judicial District Court, or her designee.
 - 7 (15) The chief judge for the Sixth Judicial District Court, or his designee.
 - 8 (16) The chief judge for the Seventh Judicial District Court, or her designee.
 - 9 (17) The chief executive officer of Morehouse General Hospital, or his designee.
 - 10 (18) The chairman of the Louisiana Hospital Association, or his designee.
 - 11 (19) The president of the Rural Hospital Coalition, or his designee.
 - 12 (20) The administrator of Riverland Medical Center, or his designee.
 - 13 (21) The chief executive officer of Madison Parish Hospital, or his designee.
 - 14 (22) The administrator of Delhi Hospital, or his designee.
 - 15 (23) The president of Glenwood Regional Medical Center, or his designee.
 - 16 (24) The chief executive officer of Oschner LSU Health Shreveport, or his designee
 - 17 (25) The executive director of the Northeast Delta Human Services Authority, or his
18 designee.
 - 19 (26) The executive director of the Central Louisiana Human Services District, or his
20 designee.
- 21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be chaired by the senator
22 representing Senate District No. 34, and it may elect a vice chair and other officers as
23 determined to be necessary.
- 24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall meet at such times and
25 places as determined by its chair.
- 26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the total membership shall
27 constitute a quorum of the task force, and any official action by the task force shall require
28 an affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum present and voting.
- 29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve
30 without compensation, except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be

1 individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

2 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may engage and solicit input,
3 recommendations, and advice from all interested parties and stakeholders.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that all departments, boards, agencies, officers, and
5 institutions of the state shall cooperate with the task force in providing information to assist
6 the task force in carrying out its mission.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall receive staff support from
8 the district office of the senator representing Senate District No. 34.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall receive public testimony and
10 comment, and shall report its findings and recommendations to the Louisiana Senate on or
11 before February 15, 2022.

12 BE FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
13 district attorney for the Fourth Judicial District, the district attorney for the Fifth Judicial
14 District, the district attorney for the Sixth Judicial District, the district attorney for the
15 Seventh Judicial District, the sheriff of the Ouachita Parish Sheriff's Office, the sheriff of the
16 Morehouse Parish Sheriff's Office, the sheriff of the Richland Parish Sheriff's Office, the
17 sheriff of the Madison Parish Sheriff's Office, the sheriff of the East Carroll Sheriff's Office,
18 the sheriff of the Tensas Parish Sheriff's Office, the sheriff of the Concordia Parish Sheriff's
19 Office, the chief judge for the Fourth Judicial District Court, the chief judge for the Fifth
20 Judicial District Court, the chief judge for the Sixth Judicial District Court, the chief judge
21 for the Seventh Judicial District Court, the chief executive officer of Morehouse General
22 Hospital, the chairman of the Louisiana Hospital Association, the president of the Rural
23 Hospital Coalition, the administrator of Riverland Medical Center, the chief executive
24 officer of Madison Parish Hospital, the administrator of Delhi Hospital, the president of
25 Glenwood Regional Medical Center, the chief executive officer of Oschner LSU Health
26 Shreveport, the executive director of the Northeast Delta Human Services Authority, and the
27 executive director of the Central Louisiana Human Services District.

