

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 131

BY SENATOR CATHEY

A RESOLUTION

To create and provide for the Study Commission on Maternal Health and Wellbeing to research and make recommendations on connecting pregnant women and new mothers, particularly in rural and underserved areas, with resources for the health and wellbeing of the mother and child.

WHEREAS, research indicates maternal mortality, severe maternal morbidity, and unexpected outcomes of pregnancy and birth resulting in significant health consequences are rising in the United States and these outcomes occur more frequently in Louisiana than in other states; and

WHEREAS, addressing maternal mental health concerns has been identified as a critical need by the Louisiana Department of Health, the Louisiana Commission on Perinatal Care and the Prevention of Infant Mortality, the Louisiana Pregnancy-Associated Mortality Review, the Louisiana Pritzker Children's Initiative, the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children, and various other commissions, councils, and advisory boards in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the Healthy Moms, Healthy Babies Advisory Council, which was charged with assessing equity and community engagement in state initiatives addressing maternal mortality and severe maternal morbidity, recommended that the state "ensure adequate access to high quality behavioral health services for pregnant and postpartum women, from early identification through screening and linkage to care and treatment for maternal mental health needs and substance abuse disorders"; and

WHEREAS, ensuring good maternal health must be a priority for our state because

it improves the quality of life for our Louisiana families and reduces costs in the long term.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby establish and provide for the Study Commission on Maternal Health and Wellbeing to research best practices for connecting pregnant women and new mothers, particularly in rural and underserved areas, with resources for the health and wellbeing of the mother and child.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study commission shall consist of the following members:

(1) One member of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee appointed by the chairman of the committee.

(2) One member of the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children appointed by the chairwoman of the committee.

(3) One member of the Louisiana Senate appointed by the president of the Senate.

(4) One member with experience in maternal care appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

(5) One member with experience in maternal care appointed by the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

(6) Two members who are affiliated with the Guiding Recovery and Creating Empowerment program, one of whom is a licensed social worker and one of whom is a licensed physician, appointed by the president of Woman's Hospital.

(7) A representative of the Louisiana Chapter of the March of Dimes appointed by the Louisiana state director of operations.

(8) The director of Health Policy and Governmental Affairs, Louisiana Primary Care Association, or her designee.

(9) A representative of Covered: Doula and Therapy Services in Shreveport appointed by its founder.

(10) A representative from the New Orleans Maternal Child Health Coalition appointed by the co-conveners.

(11) The parent educator for Madison and Tensas parishes, Louisiana Department of Health, bureau of family health, or her designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each appointing authority shall submit the names of appointees for the study commission to the Louisiana Department of Health no later than August 1, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the study commission shall convene for its first meeting no later than September 1, 2022, and at the first meeting, the members shall elect a chairman and other officers as the study commission may deem appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health and the Department of Children and Family Services shall provide support staff to the study commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study commission shall do all of the following:

(1) Identify and assess the functions and activities of existing state efforts and service systems focused on the health and wellbeing of women before, during, and after childbirth.

(2) Seek ways to address a reduction of adverse maternal-health behaviors during pregnancy, dysfunctional infant caregiving, and stressful environmental conditions that interfere with parental and family functioning.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study commission may engage, consult with, and obtain information and perspective from appropriate state entities, healthcare stakeholders, or any entity or individual with an interest in improving maternal health and wellbeing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the study commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All official actions of the study commission shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the study commission shall serve without compensation except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the study commission shall submit its findings and recommendations, together with specific proposals for legislation, by written report to the Senate Health and Welfare Committee and to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, no later than February 1, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study commission shall terminate on the date of the submission of its report or December 31, 2022, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE