

2022 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 205

BY SENATORS MIZELL, BARROW, CLOUD, HEWITT, JACKSON AND FRED
MILLS

CHILDREN. Requests the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children to conduct research to ascertain the efficacy of the program available and funds allocated to meet the needs of the children of the state.

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children to conduct ongoing research to ascertain the efficacy of the current programs available and funds allocated in meeting the needs of children of the state and to make recommendations for changes that will improve outcomes, minimize duplication of services, and fill any gaps in services necessary to promote child well-being.

WHEREAS, there are over one million children in the state of Louisiana who are the state's greatest asset and whose well-being is critical to the state's future; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana ranks 48th overall among states in child well-being, 46th in child mortality, and 49th in infant mortality; and

WHEREAS, almost thirty percent of Louisiana's children live in poverty, twenty percent live in high-poverty areas of the state, and these numbers have risen during the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, growing up in poverty is one of the greatest threats to healthy child development, which impacts the entire trajectory of a child's life; and

WHEREAS, many children in our state do not have a safe home environment including hundreds of children who are victims of sex trafficking every year; and

WHEREAS, the children of Louisiana are in need of a variety of services including

1 physical and mental health care services, meal assistance, tutorial programs, educational
2 services, mentorship, scholarships, social development programs, community development,
3 and housing assistance; and

4 WHEREAS, billions of dollars in state and federal funds are expended annually on
5 programs for children in this state; and

6 WHEREAS, numerous state departments of Louisiana provide a variety of services
7 to the states' children using several of funding sources; and

8 WHEREAS, the legislature also appropriates monies to a myriad of nongovernmental
9 programs as a mechanism to provide additional services to children; and

10 WHEREAS, there is not currently a system in place to measure the outcomes of the
11 various programs and services; and

12 WHEREAS, the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana recognizes its fiduciary
13 responsibility to the citizens of the state, particularly the state's youngest citizens, to make
14 the best use of our limited financial resources; and

15 WHEREAS, by investing wisely in our children, we can have a significant impact
16 on the trajectory of our citizens' lives and have lifelong impacts in every dimension of their
17 life, from physical and mental health to educational attainment and labor market success.

18 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate Select Committee on Women and
19 Children meet regularly and conduct research on:

- 20 (1) Access to children's basic needs such as clean water, nutritious food, safe
21 shelter, healthcare, and education.
- 22 (2) Access to resources that promote healthy development and promote the well-
23 being of all the state's children regardless of socioeconomic status.
- 24 (3) Access to children's services through every region of the state including the
25 variations of access between the urban and rural areas of the state.
- 26 (4) The value of the development of a regional approach to the provision of
27 services that promote child well-being.
- 28 (5) Current policies and programs intended to reduce child poverty and improve
29 child well-being outcomes.
- 30 (6) Best practices in other states and countries.

1 (7) Roadblocks that hinder improvement of child well-being in the state.

2 (8) The value of the development of a holistic approach to the provision of
3 services to children to improve outcomes, minimize duplication of services,
4 and fill any gaps in services.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee establish the scope of the study,
6 necessary areas of expertise and consultation not available through state resources, and
7 identify the potential cost to conduct the committee's work and deliberations.

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee obtain input from the National
9 Conference on State Legislatures, the Southern Legislative Conference, the Children's
10 Cabinet, all state agencies that are included in the Children's Budget, nongovernmental
11 organizations including faith-based organizations that receive governmental funding to
12 provide services to children, and any other entity, person, or organization that will assist the
13 committee in its research.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate, the legislative fiscal office, and the
15 legislative auditor shall provide staff support to the committee in its research.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee shall provide an initial report to
17 the legislature on or before March 1, 2023 and that the report shall include, at a minimum,
18 next steps to study.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Leonore Heavey.

	DIGEST	
SR 205 Original	2022 Regular Session	Mizell

Requests the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children conduct ongoing research to ascertain the efficacy of the programs available and funds allocated to meeting the needs of children of the state.