

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 193

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To provide for the Task Force on Child Abuse Investigation Processes.

WHEREAS, Senate Resolution No. 167 of the 2024 Regular Session established the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Investigation Processes to study the methods, systems, investigative techniques, and management of investigations involving sexual abuse of children and to propose recommendations for improving current processes; and

WHEREAS, by bringing together all stakeholders involved in investigating and prosecuting child abuse cases, the task force was able to identify a multitude of challenges and obstacles that prevent effectively protecting the children of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the task force heard critical public testimony that further identified failures in both the current child sexual abuse investigation process and all other aspects of child abuse reporting and investigations; and

WHEREAS, while some of the issues identified by the task force can be addressed immediately through legislative and policy changes, due to the complexity of child sexual abuse cases, the number of agencies involved in child abuse investigations and related judicial processes, the task force needs additional time to find solutions to the many problems concerning the state's response to child abuse cases.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby establish the Task Force on Child Abuse Investigation Processes to continue and expand upon the work on the task force established by the Senate Resolution No. 167 of the 2024 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force should continue to gather information and evaluate the following:

(1) Current procedures and protocols used by law enforcement, child protective service agencies, or other relevant agencies in the investigation of child abuse cases,

including specific child sexual abuse procedures and protocols.

(2) Interagency collaboration and communication when investigating child abuse cases.

(3) Effectiveness of investigative practices for child sexual abuse cases used in Louisiana to identify any deficiencies or areas needing improvement.

(4) Information provided to and utilized by the courts in custody cases involving child sexual abuse.

(5) Available support services including medical, psychological, and legal assistance for child sexual abuse cases and whether those services are utilized.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall identify gaps and weaknesses in current processes and recommend actionable improvements to better protect and support victims by the following:

(1) Identifying and developing specialized training programs for professionals who investigate or provide support in sexual abuse cases involving children including law enforcement officers, social workers, medical personnel, prosecutors, and educators.

(2) Recommending legislative and procedural changes to enhance the effectiveness, efficiency, and sensitivity of all child abuse investigations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consist of the following members:

(1) Two representatives from the Department of Children and Family Services, appointed by the secretary.

(2) A law enforcement officer with experience investigating sexual abuse in children, appointed by the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association.

(3) A juvenile court judge appointed by the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

(4) A family court judge appointed by the Louisiana District Judges Association.

(5) A district attorney appointed by the Louisiana District Attorneys Association.

(6) A forensic interviewer appointed by the Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers.

(7) A child psychologist appointed by the chairman of the Louisiana State Board of

Examiners of Psychologists.

(8) A practicing child psychologist with experience in child sexual assault appointed by the chairman of the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.

(9) A survivor of child sexual abuse appointed by Sexual Trauma Awareness & Response.

(10) A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, appointed by the president of the Louisiana State Board of Nursing.

(11) The president of the Louisiana Senate, or his designee.

(12) The state child ombudsman, or her designee.

(13) A representative of the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocates Association appointed by the executive director.

(14) A representative from the State Police Special Investigations Division appointed by the superintendent of state police.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any member serving on the task force pursuant to Senate Resolution No. 167 of the 2024 Regular Session of the Legislature shall continue to serve on the task force unless the designating authority appoints a different designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the names of designees for new members of the task force to the president of the Louisiana Senate no later than August 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the president of the Louisiana Senate, or his designee, shall serve as chair of the task force and the task force shall convene for its first meeting no later than September 1, 2025, at the call of the chair.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force 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 that the task force shall terminate on the date of the submission of its final report or December 31, 2027, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to president of the Louisiana Senate, the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, the Louisiana District Judges Association, the Louisiana District Attorneys Association, the Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers, the Louisiana State Board of Examiners of Psychologists, Sexual Trauma Awareness & Response, the Louisiana State Board of Nursing, the state child ombudsman, the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocates Association, and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, office of state police.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE