

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 69

BY SENATOR MORRISH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Department of Children and Family Services.

WHEREAS, according to the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, forty-four percent of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of eighteen and fifteen percent are under the age of twelve; and

WHEREAS, girls ages sixteen to nineteen are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, ninety-three percent of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker, of which thirty-four percent of those attackers were family members; and

WHEREAS, one of these victims who was sexually abused by a neighbor and family member was Erin Merryn of Illinois; and

WHEREAS, Erin was sexually abused for six and a half years by a neighbor and a family member; and

WHEREAS, Erin began a crusade her senior year of high school in 2004 to end the silence and shame around sexual abuse; and

WHEREAS, Erin was instrumental in passing a law in her home state of Illinois to address sexual abuse of children known as "Erin's Law"; and

WHEREAS, Erin has promoted child sexual abuse awareness throughout the United States, as well as establishing "Erin's Law" in other states; and

WHEREAS, establishing a Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children has been an essential first step to enacting Erin's Law in other states.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby

create the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Department of Children and Family Services. The task force shall consist of all of the following:

- (1) Two members of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate.
- (2) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his designee.
- (4) The state Superintendent of Education or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals or his designee.
- (6) The executive director of the Louisiana Violence Prevention Authority or his designee.
- (7) The Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana Association, or his designee.
- (8) One representative of an organization representing law enforcement, appointed by the superintendent of State Police.
- (9) One representative of a statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Association of Educators.
- (10) One representative of a different statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers.
- (11) One representative of an organization involved in the prevention of child abuse in the state, appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.
- (12) One representative of an organization representing school management in this state, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Association of School Board Executives.
- (13) Two members of the public appointed by the president of the Senate.
- (14) Two members of the public appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (15) The child welfare program director from the Department of Children and Family Services, or his designee.

- (16) The Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force should be individuals who are actively involved in the fields of the prevention of child abuse and neglect and child welfare. The appointment of members should reflect the geographic and racial diversity of the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall elect a presiding officer by a majority vote of the membership of the task force. The task force shall meet at the call of the presiding officer.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall make recommendations for reducing child abuse in Louisiana. In making those recommendations, the task force shall:

- (1) Gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the state.
- (2) Receive reports and testimony from individuals, state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations.
- (3) Create goals for state policy that would prevent child sexual abuse.
- (4) Submit a final report with its recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2016.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations may include proposals for specific statutory changes and methods to foster cooperation among state agencies and between the state and local government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consult with employees of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Justice, the office of state police, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Education, and any other state agency or department as necessary to accomplish the task force's responsibilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of the constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be abolished upon submission of the report to the legislature on January 1, 2016.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services and Erin Merryn.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES