

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 82

BY REPRESENTATIVE LEGER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To authorize and direct the creation of the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force, under the jurisdiction of the Louisiana Sentencing Commission and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, to provide for the membership, powers, and duties of the task force, and to require the task force to report its findings.

WHEREAS, according to United States Bureau of Justice Statistics, Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in recent years, many of Louisiana's neighbors, including Texas, South Carolina, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia have advanced comprehensive sentencing and corrections reforms that protect public safety, hold offenders accountable, and control corrections costs; and

WHEREAS, over the last several years, Louisiana has taken steps to implement cost-effective, evidence-based practices and programs that have worked to control the growth in the state's prison population; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana should build upon this promising foundation and chart a data-driven course for comprehensive reform; and

WHEREAS, input from all criminal justice stakeholders is essential in the development and implementation of cost effective changes to incarceration in the state; and

WHEREAS, it is in the best interest of the public to develop a high-level task force to conduct an examination of the state's sentencing and corrections systems and develop data-driven, research-based policy recommendations that reduce correctional populations and associated spending, hold offenders accountable, and reinvest savings into strategies shown to reduce recidivism and increase public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Sentencing Commission is limited to providing recommendations relating to sentencing and post-conviction relief and is therefore unable to complete a comprehensive assessment of and subsequent policy development for Louisiana's criminal justice system, which shall include such policy areas as corrections administration, offender supervision, and alternatives to incarceration, as well as the state's sentencing structure.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby authorize and direct the creation of the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force is hereby authorized and directed to study, evaluate, analyze, and undertake a comprehensive review of the state's adult criminal justice system and, using a data-driven approach, develop sentencing and corrections policy recommendations for legislative consideration that will accomplish the following three goals:

- (1) Reduce correctional populations and associated correctional spending by focusing prison space on serious and violent criminals.
- (2) Hold offenders accountable more efficiently by implementing or expanding research-based supervision and sentencing practices.
- (3) Reinvest savings into strategies shown to decrease recidivism, including improved reentry outcomes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force is hereby created. The membership of the task force shall be as follows:

- (1) The governor, or his designee.
- (2) The chief justice, or his designee.
- (3) The speaker of the House of Representatives, or his designee.
- (4) The speaker pro tempore of the House of Representatives, or his designee.
- (5) The chairman of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice.
- (6) The president of the Senate, or his designee.
- (7) The president pro tempore of the Senate, or his designee.
- (8) The chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary C.
- (9) The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.
- (10) The president of the Louisiana Sheriff's Association, or his designee.
- (11) The president of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association, or his designee.

(12) A district court judge designated by the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

(13) The state public defender, or his designee.

(14) The chairman of the Louisiana Sentencing Commission.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections shall serve as the chairperson of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the membership of the task force shall constitute a quorum and shall meet at the call of the chairperson, or upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the task force. All members must be notified in writing of all meetings at least five days before the date on which a meeting of the task force is scheduled.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Sentencing Commission and the Department of Public Safety and Corrections shall provide the administrative assistance and staffing as may be necessary in order to enable the task force to accomplish its goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall request technical assistance from the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, a joint private-public partnership between the United States Department of Justice and the Pew Charitable Trusts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall direct the Louisiana Sentencing Commission, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and the Office of the Judicial Administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court to provide relevant data and staff expertise to the technical assistance providers promptly upon request.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall hold its first meeting no earlier than March 1, 2016, and no later than July 1, 2016, at the call of the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall meet no less than six times.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall prepare and submit a final report that contains a detailed statement of the findings and policy recommendations of the task force to the governor, leadership and ranking members of the legislature, and the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court by March 1, 2017. The report shall be made available to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be abolished upon submission of the report.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE