

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 168

BY REPRESENTATIVES BILLIOT, BADON, BARROW, REYNOLDS, AND ST.
GERMAIN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care to study and explore the public policy and financing options for programs that could assist youth aging out of foster care to achieve successful independence once they reach the age of majority, and to require the task force to report its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than February 1, 2016.

WHEREAS, though attaining a permanent family and maintaining permanent connections are priorities for all youth in foster care, not all such youth achieve these goals prior to exiting foster care; and

WHEREAS, national studies indicate that more than one in five former foster youth will become homeless after obtaining the age of eighteen; and

WHEREAS, only fifty-eight percent of former foster youth will graduate high school by age nineteen compared to seventy-one percent of all nineteen year olds in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, seventy-one percent of young women who are former foster youth will become pregnant by age twenty-one, facing higher rates of unemployment, criminal conviction, reliance on public assistance, and involvement in the child welfare system; and

WHEREAS, at the age of twenty-four, only half of former foster youth are employed; and

WHEREAS, fewer than three percent of former foster youth will earn a college degree by age twenty-five compared to twenty-eight percent of all twenty-five year olds nationally; and

WHEREAS, one in four former foster youth will be involved in the justice system within two years of leaving the foster care system; and

WHEREAS, it is currently recognized that most young adults upon reaching age eighteen are not fully capable of assuming complete independence and becoming successful without continued support, guidance, and assistance from parents, family, and others; and

WHEREAS, foster care youth who exit care at age eighteen without a permanent family may lack the parental and familial support necessary to support their successful transition to adulthood; and

WHEREAS, while current law provides for foster care services to youth in foster care up to age eighteen, youth exiting foster care after age eighteen could benefit from additional supports and services to successfully transition to adulthood; and

WHEREAS, in Fiscal Year 2013-2014, one hundred sixty-two foster care youth exited foster care at age eighteen in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Task Force on Youth Aging Out of Foster Care to study and explore the public policy and financing options for programs and services that could assist youth aging out of foster care to achieve successful independence once they reach the age of majority.

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

(1) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his designee.

(2) The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals or his designee.

(3) The president of the Juvenile Judges Association or his designee.

(4) A member of the Louisiana Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) Association.

(5) The executive director of the Louisiana Association of Children and Family Agencies or his designee.

(6) The executive director of the National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.

(7) One member appointed by the board of directors of Louisiana Progress.

(8) One representative of the Louisiana Conference of Catholic Bishops.

(9) The president of LouisianaChildren.org or his designee.

(10) The executive director of the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association or his designee.

(11) The executive director of HP Serve or his designee.

(12) The executive director of Covenant House - New Orleans or his designee.

(13) The executive director of the Louisiana Workforce Commission or his designee.

(14) The state superintendent of education or his designee.

(15) The president of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System or his designee.

(16) The president of the Louisiana Board of Regents or his designee.

(17) One representative from the Chafee Foster Care Independence Program Independent Living Provider Coalition.

(18) The executive director of the Louisiana Housing Corporation or his designee.

(19) Two former foster care youth who have aged out of the foster care system chosen randomly from a list of names submitted by the other members of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall convene no later than August 15, 2015, and shall be chaired by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, or his designee, who shall be responsible for calling all meetings. The task force shall be staffed by the Department of Children and Family Services. The majority of the total membership shall constitute a quorum and any official action of the task force shall require a vote of a majority of the quorum present and voting.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the members of the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than February 1, 2016.

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

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE