2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 58

BY REPRESENTATIVE HILFERTY

PUBLIC HEALTH: Requests an evaluation and report concerning prospective implementation of a "baby box" program as a means of reducing infant mortality

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
To urge and request the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department of Health to
evaluate the feasibility and desirability of implementing a "baby box" program as a
means of reducing infant mortality, and to report findings of the evaluation to the
legislative committees on health and welfare.
WHEREAS, in March of 2017, Alabama became the third U.S. state, after New
Jersey and Ohio, to make free "baby boxes" available to the families of all newborns on a
statewide basis; and
WHEREAS, the "baby box" distributed in these states is a sturdy cardboard box
which doubles as a bassinet and comes with a firm foam mattress, a tight-fitting sheet, and
breastfeeding accessories; and
WHEREAS, these baby box distribution initiatives are a variation of a program
providing maternity packages in Finland which began approximately eighty years ago when
that country suffered a postneonatal death rate of nearly ten percent; and
WHEREAS, Finland's infant mortality rate has dropped by over ninety-five percent
in the past eight decades and is now one of the world's lowest; and
WHEREAS, by contrast, among the thirty-five nations that comprise the
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the United States ranks sixth-
from-last (twenty-ninth) in infant mortality; and

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1 WHEREAS, within the U.S., Louisiana has a particularly high rate of infant 2 mortality; according to the 2016 America's Health Rankings report, at over eight infant 3 deaths per one thousand live births, Louisiana's infant mortality rate ranks forty-eighth 4 among U.S. states and is nearly twice that of the state with the nation's lowest infant 5 mortality rate (Massachusetts); and

WHEREAS, promoting safe sleep and reducing other risk factors for infant mortality
have been longstanding priorities of the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department
of Health, the child welfare division of the Department of Children and Family Services, and
the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel.

10 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby 11 urge and request the bureau of family health of the Louisiana Department of Health to 12 evaluate the feasibility and desirability of implementing a "baby box" program of the type 13 described in this Resolution as a means to promote safe sleep among families with newborns 14 and thereby reduce infant mortality.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting the evaluation requested in this Resolution, the bureau of family health shall engage, collaborate with, and obtain information and perspective from the child welfare division of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel, and any other stakeholder groups as deemed appropriate by the director of the bureau of family health.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the bureau of family health shall submit a written report of its findings resulting from the evaluation requested in this Resolution to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
 secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the secretary of the Department of Children
 and Family Services, and the chairperson of the Louisiana State Child Death Review Panel.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 58 Original

2017 Regular Session

Hilferty

Urges and requests the bureau of family health of the La. Dept. of Health to evaluate the feasibility and desirability of a prospective program to distribute "baby boxes" (sturdy cardboard boxes which double as bassinets and come with a firm foam mattress, tight-fitting sheet, and breastfeeding accessories) as a means of reducing infant mortality, akin to similar programs of three other U.S. states.

Requests the bureau of family health to report findings of the evaluation to the legislative committees on health and welfare no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the 2018 R.S.