

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 45

BY REPRESENTATIVE BAGLEY

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the office for citizens with developmental disabilities of the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct a study concerning the feasibility and desirability of implementing a system for tracking the location of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and to report findings of the study to certain legislative committees.

WHEREAS, the safety of the children of this state is a paramount concern of the legislature; and

WHEREAS, along with groups that advocate for people with disabilities and their families, the legislature works to foster a culture in our state that cherishes children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and prioritizes the needs and well-being of these children; and

WHEREAS, beyond special educational and health needs, children with developmental and intellectual disabilities often have special needs in terms of their safety; and

WHEREAS, with respect to children with developmental and intellectual disabilities, wandering (also called elopement) refers to a child leaving a safe area or a responsible caregiver for longer than the brief time that a typical toddler might run off from someone who is watching over him; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates that wandering is an important safety issue which can affect people with disabilities, their families, and the community; and

WHEREAS, numerous studies have concluded that children with disabilities are at much higher risk of experiencing exploitation and violence than their peers who do not have disabilities; and

WHEREAS, examples of such studies include one published in 2012 in the medical journal *The Lancet* which found that, overall, children with disabilities are almost four times more likely to experience violence than children without disabilities, and that the risk of a child with a developmental or intellectual disability experiencing sexual violence is over four-and-a-half times greater than that of a child with no such disability; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by its adoption of House Concurrent Resolution No. 53 of the 2020 Regular Session and House Concurrent Resolution No. 84 of the 2019 Regular Session, both of which addressed potential means of addressing safety issues experienced by people with autism, the legislature has recently made efforts to find policy solutions for protecting people with special needs; and

WHEREAS, a system for tracking the physical location of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities could be a means of ensuring the safety of such children; however, matters such as privacy, cost, duties and responsibilities relating to the system, and, potentially, other important considerations should be evaluated before any policymaking body considers implementing a system of this type.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the office for citizens with developmental disabilities of the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct a study concerning the feasibility and desirability of implementing a system for tracking the location of children with developmental and intellectual disabilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting the study called for in this Resolution, the office for citizens with developmental disabilities shall engage, collaborate with, and obtain information and perspective from stakeholder groups that advocate for children with developmental and intellectual disabilities and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall submit findings from the study called for in this Resolution in the form of a written report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice, the Senate Committee on Judiciary B, and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library on or before February 1, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE