

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 97

BY REPRESENTATIVE JONES

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request that the Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center study the history of parole in Louisiana, analyze current parole laws and regulations, and report their findings to the Legislature of Louisiana no later than February 1, 2022.

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the country, with approximately thirty thousand individuals in state prison; and

WHEREAS, the average age of those in prison is forty and one-half years; and

WHEREAS, one of every five persons in Louisiana prisons is serving life without the possibility of parole; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Louisiana has tens of thousands of individuals under parole supervision; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana entered into a bi-partisan justice reinvestment process, as advanced by the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, that resulted in legislation to decrease Louisiana's prison population and to end Louisiana's title as the state with the highest incarceration rate in the country; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has decreased its prison population, but not enough to change its title as the state with the highest incarceration rate; and

WHEREAS, the national prison population decreased three percent between 2019 and 2020, while Louisiana's prison population decreased two point four percent; and

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana has made many reforms to the state's parole system, including reforms passed as part of the 2017 justice reinvestment legislation; and

WHEREAS, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative also sought to reduce the number of individuals on supervised release and reduce the caseload of probation and parole officers; and

WHEREAS, despite the success of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Louisiana still provides unequal parole opportunities due to conflicting laws; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's laws have developed over centuries and have become inconsistent; and

WHEREAS, there is a collection of state laws that govern parole eligibility; and

WHEREAS, states across the country are looking to reform their parole systems to ensure these systems are equitable and just; and

WHEREAS, Voice of the Experienced is a Louisiana membership organization established by and for persons who are directly impacted by the criminal justice system, including incarcerated persons and their family members, persons under community supervision, and persons living with the lifelong impacts of criminal convictions; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Parole Project is a non-profit organization working to enhance public safety through advocacy, programming, and services for persons who have served long prison sentences so that they may reach their full potential; and

WHEREAS, the Promise of Justice Initiative is a non-profit organization working to create positive change for individuals in the criminal legal system at the intersection of impact litigation, direct services, and community engagement; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana Survivors for Reform is a coalition of crime survivors, families of homicide victims, and organizations creating change in the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center provides law students the opportunity to represent and assist individuals in parole and pardon matters.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center to study the history of parole in Louisiana, analyze current parole laws and regulations, and propose recommendations to create a more uniform parole system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and

Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center may work with and receive information from various stakeholders in the criminal justice system, including but not limited to representatives of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Board of Pardons, the Louisiana District Attorneys Association, the committee on parole, Sexual Trauma Awareness and Response, Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Victims of Innocent Citizens Empowered, and other relevant state agencies and institutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center may also study relevant case law and best practices to better understand other approaches to parole in the state and federal systems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center shall report their findings to the Legislature of Louisiana no later than February 1, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of the Voice of the Experienced, the president of the Louisiana Parole Project, the executive director of the Promise of Justice Initiative, the organizer of Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the supervising faculty member of the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one print copy and one electronic copy of any report produced pursuant to this Resolution shall be submitted to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:772.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE