

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 322

BY REPRESENTATIVES BRYANT AND KNOX

A RESOLUTION

To create the Task Force on Sentencing for Second Degree Murder to determine the best changes to sentencing for second degree murder.

WHEREAS, second degree murder in Louisiana under R.S. 14:30.1 includes a homicide committed with the specific intent to kill or inflict great bodily harm and a homicide committed without intent during the perpetration or attempted perpetration of certain enumerated felonies, commonly referred to as the "felony murder" doctrine; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to R.S. 14:30.1(B), a conviction for second degree murder carries a mandatory, non-discretionary penalty of life imprisonment at hard labor without benefit of parole, probation, or suspension of sentence; and

WHEREAS, in many other jurisdictions across the United States, a homicide committed with specific intent or under the felony murder doctrine is classified as first degree murder, whereas second degree murder frequently encompasses lower grades of intent or lacks a mandatory sentence of life without parole eligibility; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive evaluation is necessary to determine whether Louisiana's second degree murder framework conceptually aligns with the legal definitions utilized nationally, and to understand the specific historical and legal justifications for applying a mandatory life sentence without parole eligibility to this category of offense; and

WHEREAS, there is currently a lack of centralized, empirical data indicating how many second degree murder indictments and convictions within this state proceed under a specific intent theory versus a felony murder theory; and

WHEREAS, analyzing the exact volume and proportion of cases prosecuted under the felony murder doctrine is vital for the legislature to make informed, data-driven policy decisions regarding sentencing that is proportional to the offense.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create the Task Force on Second Degree Murder to study, analyze, and evaluate the definition, application, and penalty structure of second degree murder in Louisiana.

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

(1) The chairwoman of the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice or her designee.

(2) One member of the Louisiana House of Representatives appointed by the speaker.

(3) The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or his designee.

(4) The chairwoman of the Board of Pardons or her designee.

(5) The executive director of the committee on parole or his designee.

(6) The executive director of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association or his designee.

(7) The executive director of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association or his designee.

(8) The state public defender or his designee.

(9) The executive director of the Louisiana Parole Project or his designee.

(10) The president of the Louisiana Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chairman and vice chairman of the task force shall be elected by a majority of the task force members at its first meeting, which shall be called no later than September 1, 2026, and the members may select other officers as the task force deems appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall meet at such times and places as determined by its chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the task force constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. All official actions of the task force require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Rules of Order of the House of Representatives or applicable Joint Rules shall apply to all meetings of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that meetings of the task force are subject to the Open Meetings Law, R.S. 42:11 et seq., and records of the task force are subject to the Public Records Law, R.S. 44:1 et seq.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate following the conclusion of its business or February 1, 2027, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be staffed by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, which shall provide the necessary support and facilities for the task force to perform its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the legislature no later than February 1, 2027.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each of the task force members provided in this Resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit one print copy and one electronic copy of any report produced pursuant to this Resolution 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