



1 the last six years, causing more Louisianan citizens to be in need of civil legal aid, as  
2 demonstrated by the following:

3 (1) Interest rates on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) funds have declined seventy-  
4 four percent between 2007 and 2011, resulting in unavoidable cuts in IOLTA funding for  
5 legal services for the poorest citizens.

6 (2) The three largest civil legal aid providers in Louisiana have experienced a forty  
7 percent decrease in funding from their major benefactor (the Legal Services Corporation)  
8 in the past six years, making them less able to meet the overwhelming demand for civil legal  
9 aid; and

10 (3) Louisiana is one of only three states in the nation in which the state provides no  
11 statewide appropriation nor statewide dedicated fines or fees to support the civil legal aid  
12 providers in Louisiana; and

13 WHEREAS, decreases in funding combined with the high poverty rate in Louisiana  
14 overwhelms the limited staff and resources of civil legal aid offices, which undermines the  
15 ability of low-income citizens to access the civil justice system, burdens state agencies and  
16 resources, and places the already challenged legal aid system in Louisiana in crisis; and

17 WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of all stakeholders in the justice system of  
18 Louisiana to ensure access to justice for all; and

19 WHEREAS, in 2014, Louisiana attorneys provided over three million dollars in  
20 volunteer legal services, and out of state attorneys appearing in Louisiana courts contribute  
21 two hundred dollars per motion to ensure equal access to justice; and

22 WHEREAS, there is recognized value in showing that legal assistance not only has  
23 an immediate benefit for the recipient of the services, but can also have multi-fold financial  
24 benefits for the community and state; and

25 WHEREAS, in 2010, Louisiana State University economics Professor James  
26 Richardson estimated in a study titled "Legal Services Programs in Louisiana: Their  
27 Economic Impact on the State of Louisiana," that for every dollar spent on legal services for  
28 the poor, there is a benefit of up to two dollars and forty cents, and that the three legal  
29 services corporations assisted their clients in either acquiring or retaining over fifty-eight

1 million dollars, which initiated a series of economic transactions totaling between seventy  
2 million dollars and one hundred and seven million dollars for the state; and

3 WHEREAS, the Access to Justice Commission, with representatives from the  
4 Louisiana Supreme Court, Louisiana State Bar Association, and Louisiana Bar Foundation,  
5 believes that an updated economic impact study is vital to understanding the full scope of  
6 the need for civil legal aid in Louisiana and the benefits to be obtained by the state.

7 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the  
8 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Access to Justice Commission to  
9 commission an economic impact study regarding the need for civil legal aid and the benefits  
10 for this state to be funded by the Louisiana Bar Foundation, and that the Access to Justice  
11 Commission report its findings to the Louisiana Legislature no later than January 31, 2017.

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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)]

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HR 2 Original

2016 Second Extraordinary Session

Magee

Requests that the Access to Justice Commission conduct an economic impact study on the need for civil legal aid and the benefits for this state, and report its findings to the legislature no later than Jan. 31, 2017.