

2020 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY REPRESENTATIVE JONES

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the office of juvenile justice of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to study the impact of COVID-19 on its operations, specifically as it pertains to the safety and security of juveniles and staff at its facilities, as well as the feasibility of releasing low-risk, nonviolent juvenile detainees and its impact on mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and to report the number of juveniles and staff that have died as a result of COVID-19.

WHEREAS, according to a letter from the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, juveniles in poor health and those with underlying conditions are particularly vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus, and juveniles held in facilities are at increased risk of contracting and spreading the virus to others, including staff and their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, in the same letter, the chief justice emphasized the importance of minimizing the number of children held in close quarters, including jails, detention centers, and secure care facilities, in order to contain the virus; and

WHEREAS, according to information from the office of juvenile justice, in response to the public health crisis related to the spread of COVID-19, the office of juvenile justice established quarantine and isolation guidelines to accommodate any determined exposures within its facilities and is working with its medical provider and the office of public health of the Louisiana Department of Health to determine the most appropriate treatment for juveniles in its facilities who may fall ill; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the establishment of these guidelines, the office of juvenile justice limited the number of visitors, contractors, and deliveries on secure care

campuses since the onset of the public health crisis and screened each person entering the secure care facilities; and

WHEREAS, as of April 9, 2020, there were twenty-one juveniles and eleven employees who tested positive for COVID-19 at office of juvenile justice secure care facilities; and

WHEREAS, it is important for the office of juvenile justice to strive for and maintain the safety, security, and well-being of the juveniles and staff in its facilities and to take necessary precautions to mitigate any potential spread of COVID-19.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the office of juvenile justice of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to study the impact of COVID-19 on its operations, specifically as it pertains to the safety and security of juveniles and staff at its facilities, as well as the feasibility of releasing low-risk, nonviolent juvenile detainees and its impact on mitigating the spread of COVID-19, and to report the number of juveniles and staff that have died as a result of COVID-19.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of juvenile justice shall report its findings to the legislature no later than January 1, 2021.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the deputy secretary of the office of juvenile justice.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE