

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 118

BY REPRESENTATIVE CARPENTER

A RESOLUTION

To create a task force to study and make recommendations for implementing a state-mandated paid family and medical leave program for the benefit of Louisiana workers.

WHEREAS, the United States is the only industrialized nation in the world that does not mandate access to paid family and medical leave benefits; and

WHEREAS, during the coronavirus pandemic, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act was signed into law, and it required certain employers to expand family and medical leave for specific reasons related to COVID-19; however, those provisions of the Act expired December 31, 2020; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act was signed into law and extended and expanded some provisions, including provisions referring to emergency paid family leave, of the Family First Coronavirus Response Act from April 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021; and

WHEREAS, there is currently federal law that addresses unpaid leave, which is known as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), and it requires a business with at least fifty employees to provide unpaid leave; and

WHEREAS, a comprehensive paid family and medical leave program would guarantee leave for Louisiana workers, who may need to take temporary and necessary leave, to care for an ill family member, newborn, or newly adopted or fostered child, to recover from a serious illness or temporary disability, such as pregnancy, or to address needs arising from a family member's military service deployment; and

WHEREAS, the lack of paid family and medical leave presents a challenge for Louisiana workers who, in some cases, have to continue working, while they are personally or seriously ill, so they do not risk losing their income; and

WHEREAS, another challenge Louisiana workers might face is that, in some cases, they may not be able to take care of family members who are seriously ill or take care of children because they do not have access to paid family and medical leave and cannot afford to not work and attend to their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's infant mortality rate is eight and seven tenths percent per one thousand live births, which is the second highest in the nation, and Louisiana's maternal mortality rate is fifty-eight and one tenth percent per one hundred thousand deaths, which is the highest in the nation; and

WHEREAS, one huge benefit of paid family and medical leave contended by proponents is that paid family and medical leave may decrease incidents of low birthweight and preterm births, reduce infant mortality rates, reduce rates of hospitalization among infants, reduce maternal mortality rates, and improve maternal health; and

WHEREAS, a paid family and medical leave program would not only benefit Louisiana workers and their families but also Louisiana employers because Louisiana employers can also participate in the paid family and medical leave program and utilize family and medical leave when necessary to take care of themselves and their own family members; and

WHEREAS, paid family and medical leave is not only beneficial healthwise, but could also provide an economic incentive, such as increasing labor force participation and employee productivity and increasing employee retention; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana prides itself on being a family-first state and implementing a paid family and medical leave program could provide both a favorable economical impact to the state and health and financial security for Louisiana workers and their families.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby establish the Paid Family and Medical Leave Task Force to study and make recommendations for implementing a state-mandated paid family and medical leave program for the benefit of Louisiana workers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force shall be as follows:

- (1) The secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission or his designee.
- (2) One representative from the Agenda for Children.

- (3) One representative from the Louisiana Association of Self Insured Employers.
- (4) One representative from the Louisiana Home Builders Association.
- (5) One representative from the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry.
- (6) One representative from the National Federal of Independent Business.
- (7) One representative from the New Orleans Maternal and Child Health Coalition.
- (8) One representative from the Council for a Better Louisiana.
- (9) One representative from the Pelican Chapter Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.
- (10) One representative from the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council.
- (11) One representative from the Louisiana AFL-CIO.
- (12) One representative from the Louisiana Women Lead.
- (13) One representative from the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association.
- (14) One representative from the March of Dimes-Louisiana Chapter.
- (15) One representative from the Louisiana Family Forum.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Workforce Commission shall provide staff support as needed by the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at the first meeting, the members of the task force shall elect a chairperson, who shall preside over the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force shall serve without compensation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall convene its first meeting by September 1, 2021, and shall meet as frequently as it deems necessary for the timely performance of its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana not later than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2022 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall study and make recommendations on matters that include but are not limited to the following:

- (1) Any and all benefits that Louisiana workers could receive if Louisiana implemented a state-mandated paid family and medical leave program.
- (2) The advantages and disadvantages of implementing a state-mandated paid family and medical leave program.
- (3) The mechanisms or measures to provide family and medical leave to self-employed workers and gig workers.
- (4) Who would fund the state-mandated paid family and medical leave program and how would the program be funded?
- (5) What other states, preferably neighboring states, if any, have enacted a state-mandated paid family and medical leave program?
- (6) If implemented, how can Louisiana structure its own state-mandated paid family and medical leave program?

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the chief executive officer of the Agenda for Children, the president of the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, the Louisiana state director of the National Federation of Independent Business, the coordinator of the New Orleans Maternal and Child Health Coalition, the president of the Council for a Better Louisiana, the chairperson of the Louisiana Developmental Disabilities Council, the president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO, the executive director of the Louisiana Women Lead, the president of the March of Dimes-Louisiana Chapter, the president of the Louisiana Family Forum, and the president of the Louisiana Association of Self Insured Employers, the president of the Louisiana Home Builders Association, the president of the Pelican Chapter Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc., and the president of the Louisiana Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES