

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 88

BY SENATOR MIZELL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Education to enact policies to locate and assist truant children who may be trafficked.

WHEREAS, under Louisiana law, a truant child is a child who is habitually absent from school or habitually tardy without proper authorization, and in some cases is a child who misses five or more unexcused days of school within a school year; and

WHEREAS, a child being trafficked is more likely to also be a truant child, according to the United States Department of Education in the January 2021 report, "What Schools Can Do to Prevent, Respond, and Help Students to Recover From Human Trafficking, Second Edition"; and

WHEREAS, a child who is being trafficked is also likely to have been in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services, having witnessed or experienced abuse or neglect prior to being trafficked; and

WHEREAS, the "Human Trafficking, Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes, and Commercial Sexual Exploitation" 2021 Annual Report published by the Department of Children and Family Services identified five hundred thirty children who were victims of trafficking in 2020 and received services in the form of mental health or substance abuse treatment, medical care, or basic housing, clothing, and shelter needs; and

WHEREAS, the annual report identified that five hundred of the five hundred thirty children were forced into sex trafficking and four hundred seventy-six of the five hundred thirty juvenile victims were female; and

WHEREAS, the juvenile victims were most commonly trafficked in the parishes of East Baton Rouge, Orleans, Caddo, Rapides, Plaquemines, and Ouachita.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Education to enact policies to locate and

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contact truant children who may be trafficked and provide appropriate services to treat potential substance use disorders, mental health concerns, or medical health needs.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Education.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE