

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 13

BY SENATOR FESI

A RESOLUTION

To designate Thursday, April 11, 2024, as Child Advocacy Center Day in Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Louisiana's Child Advocacy Centers (CACs) have made valuable contributions to the state and have significantly improved the lives of children and families; and

WHEREAS, April is recognized nationally as Child Abuse Prevention Month, highlighting the importance of protecting children from all forms of abuse and neglect; and

WHEREAS, alarming statistics reveal that one in ten children will experience sexual abuse before reaching age eighteen, emphasizing the critical need for resources and support systems for victims; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana CACs provide essential services to over 7,000 children annually across all sixty-four parishes of the state, offering assistance in cases involving physical abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, human trafficking, and first-hand exposure to domestic violence and homicide; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana CACs provide education and awareness efforts for the prevention, identification, and reporting of child abuse, and in 2023 alone, CACs in Louisiana reached over 58,000 professionals, children, and community members; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of Louisiana's CACs is to provide every child victim referred to a CAC with a comfortable, child-friendly environment for forensic interviewing, victim advocacy, mental health, and other services in order to reduce further trauma to the child and promote healing; and

WHEREAS, the collaborative efforts of multidisciplinary teams within CACs are essential in coordinating comprehensive responses to child abuse cases; those teams typically include representatives of District Attorney offices, the Department of Children and Family Services, various law enforcement agencies, medical and mental health providers, and victim advocate groups; and

WHEREAS, the evidence-based practices employed by CACs have been proven to enhance child well-being, improve outcomes for children and families, and result in

significant cost savings to taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers is the state chapter established to empower, collaborate, and advocate for Louisiana's CACs, offering vital training, technical assistance, data collection, and advocacy; and

WHEREAS, with eleven centers who are currently full accredited members in good standing with the National Children's Alliance, and three centers on the path to national accreditation, Louisiana's CACs are a part of a network of over 900 centers across the nation which serve over 350,000 children annually.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate Thursday, April 11, 2024, as Child Advocacy Center Day in Louisiana, recognizing the vital role of Child Advocacy Centers in safeguarding the well-being of children and families across the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers in appreciation for their tireless efforts in advocating for and supporting Child Advocacy Centers throughout Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE