

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 50

BY REPRESENTATIVE CHASSION

CORR FACILITIES/JAILS: Requests certain state and governmental entities to report on opioid abatement and treatment programs in correctional facilities, and to clarify guidance regarding available funding for such programs

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Department of Public Safety  
3 and Corrections, and the Louisiana Department of Health to jointly report on  
4 programs for opioid abatement and treatment in correctional facilities across the  
5 state, and to urge and request the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force and the  
6 attorney general to clarify guidance regarding available funding streams for this  
7 purpose.

8 WHEREAS, the "opioid crisis" is largely attributed to successful marketing  
9 campaigns for prescription drugs focused on pain management, such as oxycontin; and

10 WHEREAS, research from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
11 indicates that prescription opioid sales in the United States quadrupled from 1999 to 2010;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, opioid-involved overdose deaths averaged 30,000 in 2015, 50,000 in  
14 2019, and 84,000 in 2023. The surge has since declined to 54,000 in 2024; and

15 WHEREAS, the legislature and governmental entities across the United States  
16 recognize that opioid addiction is an important public health issue affecting residents of all  
17 communities. Multiple federal and state laws have been enacted to combat this issue; and

18 WHEREAS, the data provided herein appeared in a 2025 Louisiana Legislative  
19 Auditor (LLA) report titled "Opioid Settlement Funds - Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task  
20 Force/Corporation" (Audit Control # 40240017); and

1           WHEREAS, over the past decade, congress has increased federal funding for  
2 evidence-based initiatives for opioid use, including medication-assisted treatment and peer  
3 recovery networks. Since fiscal year 2018, congress has provided more than \$1 billion  
4 annually through the State Opioid Response grant program administered by the Substance  
5 Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and

6           WHEREAS, in 2016, synthetic opioids, particularly fentanyl, surpassed heroin and  
7 prescription opioids as the leading contributors to overdose deaths in the United States; and

8           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) reported 1,083 opioid-  
9 involved deaths in 2023 and a total of 5,256 such deaths from 2019 to 2023, with the highest  
10 numbers occurring in Jefferson, St. Tammany, Lafayette, Livingston, and Orleans parishes;  
11 and

12           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance Program reported that  
13 opioid poisoning death rates grew from 7.2 per 100,000 residents in 2016 to 29.99 in 2022,  
14 before declining to 23.95 in 2023, with the highest rates occurring in Washington, St.  
15 Bernard, Point Coupee, Livingston, Rapides, West Baton Rouge, and West Feliciana  
16 parishes; and

17           WHEREAS, the Louisiana Opioid Data and Surveillance System tracks new  
18 prescriptions by prescriber parish location, with a statewide average of 68 per 100 persons  
19 in 2023. That year, prescription rates were highest in Caddo, Concordia, Rapides, East  
20 Baton Rouge, Jefferson, Evangeline, Richland, and St. Landry parishes; and

21           WHEREAS, in 2023, emergency departments reported to the Louisiana Hospital  
22 Association that 13,937 persons were admitted for drug poisoning-related visits, not all of  
23 which involved opioids, representing a decline from 15,665 in 2021. The highest numbers  
24 occurred in Orleans, Jefferson, East Baton Rouge, and St. Tammany parishes; and

25           WHEREAS, law enforcement officers and emergency medical technicians are  
26 systematically the first to encounter individuals who have succumbed to opioid use disorder,  
27 particularly those accused of violating drug possession laws or committing other crimes in  
28 relation to drug misuse or addiction; and

1           WHEREAS, when individuals are arrested, including those who may be detoxing  
2 from opioid use and misuse, they are wholly dependent on correctional institutions to  
3 address their physical and mental health needs; and

4           WHEREAS, multiple state and local governments filed lawsuits against companies  
5 that manufacture, market, and distribute opioids and, in 2021, reached the first nationwide  
6 settlement commonly known as the "Opioid Settlement Funds"; and

7           WHEREAS, Louisiana is participating in fifteen settlements, resulting in  
8 approximately \$600 million in funding to be received from 2022 through 2038; and

9           WHEREAS, according to the memorandum of understanding (MOU), approved  
10 purposes for settlement funds mean evidence-based, forward-looking strategies to be used  
11 for providing treatment for individuals affected by substance abuse disorders, support for  
12 those in recovery, and treatment for individuals not covered by Medicaid or private  
13 insurance for addictive services; and

14           WHEREAS, Louisiana created the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force  
15 (LaOATF) as an advisory board for the opioid settlement funds; and

16           WHEREAS, the LLA produced a performance audit on May 7, 2025, reviewing how  
17 Louisiana oversees, distributes, and spends opioid settlement funds; and

18           WHEREAS, the LaOATF has, as of October 2024, distributed approximately \$98.5  
19 million in funds. The LLA reported that relatively little of the funds (\$8.6 million, as of  
20 September 2024, amongst the survey responses) had been spent on treatment, prevention,  
21 and other strategies to address opioid abuse; and

22           WHEREAS, the LLA noted several key findings in the performance audit:

23           (1) No entity is specifically tasked with enforcing the terms of settlement  
24 agreements, such as approved uses of funds.

25           (2) LaOATF, in its advisory capacity over settlement funds, lacks authority under  
26 its MOU to ensure parish and sheriff expenditures comply with the MOU.

27           (3) LaOATF has retained \$21.1 million for administration in the Local Government  
28 Fee Fund (LGFF), as of September 2024, while dispensing \$98.5 million to parishes and  
29 sheriffs.

1 (4) Many parishes and sheriffs have yet to spend any of the allocated opioid  
2 settlement funds, noting barriers such as lack of clarity surrounding acceptable spending,  
3 staffing issues, and lack of programs and long-term recovery services in respective areas.

4 (5) Louisiana's MOU requires parishes, but not sheriffs, to submit an annual  
5 expenditure report to LaOATF; and

6 WHEREAS, Louisiana and Georgia are the only two states that distribute settlement  
7 funds directly to sheriffs; and

8 WHEREAS, LaOATF is composed of five members serving three-year terms,  
9 including a representative of LDH, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana  
10 Municipal Association, the Police Jury Association, and a person appointed by the governor  
11 who is a licensed substance abuse and mental health services provider; and

12 WHEREAS, LaOATF contracted with a non-government corporation, the Louisiana  
13 Opioid Abatement Administration Corporation, to receive and distribute funds; and

14 WHEREAS, the Louisiana District Attorneys Association provides administrative  
15 support for both the task force and the corporation; and

16 WHEREAS, according to Johns Hopkins University, cited by LLA, "the process of  
17 deciding how to spend opioid settlement funds should be guided by data, public health  
18 leaders, and individuals with lived experience of opioid misuse"; and

19 WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana passed House Bill No. 3 (Act No. 4, 2024  
20 2nd E.S.) regarding pretrial drug testing and screening that provides as follows: "The  
21 expenses and costs incurred relative to the mandatory drug testing and the screening . . . shall  
22 be deemed to be an approved purpose for use of opioid funds"; and

23 WHEREAS, the LLA audit recommended that the LaOATF coordinate with the  
24 attorney general to ensure compliance with the national settlement agreements, to which  
25 LaOATF staff agreed; and

26 WHEREAS, the LLA recommended that the LaOATF consider using data and  
27 information from public health leaders and individuals with lived experience of opioid  
28 misuse to determine the best use for opioid settlement funds, to which LaOATF staff agreed;  
29 and

1           WHEREAS, the LLA recommended that the LaOATF ensure parishes submit timely  
2 reports, to which LaOATF agreed; and

3           WHEREAS, the LLA recommended that the MOU be amended to require sheriffs  
4 to report in a similar manner as parishes, to which LaOATF staff agreed; and

5           WHEREAS, the LLA recommended that the LaOATF should include the results  
6 achieved from the settlement fund expenditures within its annual report, to which LaOATF  
7 staff agreed.

8           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby  
9 urge and request the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Department of Public Safety and  
10 Corrections, and the Louisiana Department of Health to jointly report on programs for opioid  
11 abatement and treatment in correctional facilities across the state, and to urge and request  
12 the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force and the attorney general to clarify guidance  
13 regarding available funding streams for this purpose.

14           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge  
15 and request the Louisiana Department of Health to provide best practices for opioid  
16 treatment programs in correctional facilities, including all reasonable data, to develop a  
17 meaningful budget for such programs including but not limited to costs, delivery systems,  
18 and reasonably available federal, state, and local funding.

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby further  
20 urge and request that the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force and the attorney general  
21 modify the MOU to provide additional clarity and guidance that aligns with litigation  
22 settlement agreements.

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby further  
24 urge and request that the Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force and the attorney general  
25 modify the MOU to provide reporting requirements for sheriffs to assist the LaOATF with  
26 producing accurate annual reports.

27           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge  
28 and request the report prescribed by this Resolution to be submitted to the legislature no later  
29 than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2027 Regular Session.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
2 executive director of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the secretary of the Department of  
3 Public Safety and Corrections, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the  
4 Louisiana Opioid Abatement Task Force, and the attorney general.

5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one print copy and one electronic copy of any  
6 report produced pursuant to this Resolution be submitted to the David R. Poynter Legislative  
7 Research Library as required by R.S. 24:772.

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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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HCR 50 Engrossed

2026 Regular Session

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Requests the La. Sheriffs' Assoc., the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections, and the La. Dept. of Health to jointly report to the legislature on opioid abatement and treatment programs in correctional facilities. Requests the La. Opioid Task Force and the attorney general to modify the memorandum of understanding to provide reporting requirements for sheriffs who receive opioid settlement funds and to clarify guidance on the use of funding for such programs.

Requests the report to the legislature no later than 30 days before the convening of the 2027 R.S.