

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 135

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to establish partnerships with universities in the state of Louisiana in order to provide access to individual therapy and drug treatment for inmates at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Women's and Policy Research Commission (commission) is the state commission charged with monitoring the status of Louisiana women for the purposes of evaluating their economic, educational, and health issues, analyzing trends that impact women's health and prosperity, and providing policy recommendations to address the challenges women in our state face; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 668 of the 2003 Regular Session of the Legislature requires the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission to submit detailed annual reports to the governor on each subject which it is monitoring; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission's 2013 Report to the governor (report) focused on four main areas including women's health; gender-based violence; women, education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math; and women and economic concerns; and

WHEREAS, the report also included a special trends section focusing on incarcerated women in the state as female incarceration impacts health, safety, and the well-being of many women and communities throughout Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the special trends section of the report reveals that Louisiana's rate of incarceration in 2012 was eight hundred and ninety-three per one hundred thousand people, a rate which is twenty percent higher than any other state; and

WHEREAS, members of the commission visited the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW), the only female correctional facility operating at the state level, and made it the focus of their research on Louisiana incarcerated women's issues; and

WHEREAS, the report reveals that of the average one thousand and eighty women incarcerated at LCIW in Fiscal Year 2013, forty-four percent were listed as being on psychiatric medication, seventy-seven percent were categorized as suffering from severe mental illnesses, and seventy-eight percent were categorized as having an addiction disorder; and

WHEREAS, the report states that the high number of people with mental health and substance abuse disorders in the justice system is expensive, and that individuals with these behavior health issues have high recidivism rates; and

WHEREAS, the Steve Hoyle Intensive Substance Abuse Treatment Program, the state's drug treatment program, located at the Bossier Parish Prison, only reserves twenty-five positions for incarcerated women; and

WHEREAS, the LCIW offers support groups and makes quality healthcare available to many inmates who may never have had adequate access to health care prior to their incarceration; however, LCIW does not have the resources to offer individual drug treatment to inmates; and

WHEREAS, a number of universities in the state of Louisiana offer degrees in social work, psychiatry, and psychology and are in a unique position to offer their guidance or assistance to those incarcerated at LCIW.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request that the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections explore and establish partnerships with universities within the state to provide additional access to individual therapy and drug treatment for inmates at the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the president of each university in the state of Louisiana.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE