

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 204

BY REPRESENTATIVES SMITH, BARROW, AND ST. GERMAIN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to align its job training programs across all prison systems to high-demand, high-wage jobs in a gender-neutral manner to assist women in attaining such jobs upon release.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, pursuant to R.S. 46:2525, has submitted to the governor its annual report; and

WHEREAS, the commission's 2013 report to the governor addresses the commission's duties: monitoring the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of evaluating their economic, educational, and health concerns, needs, and hardships; identifying and analyzing trends that impact the health and prosperity of Louisiana women; and advising the governor on particular hardships, concerns, and needs that challenge Louisiana women and their possible solutions; and

WHEREAS, multimillion dollar companies are expected to relocate to Louisiana and have an urgent need for skilled workers in high-need, high-wage jobs that focus on science, technology, engineering, and math, which have been traditionally more male-dominated fields; and

WHEREAS, one aspect of the commission's report focuses on efforts underway in Louisiana to increase the number of Louisiana women entering "Women, Education and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math" (STEM) career fields, in which the gender wage gap tends to be narrower and the wages higher than in other fields; and

WHEREAS, per capita, Louisiana has the highest rate of incarceration of all of the states of the union; and

WHEREAS, according to the commission, most women incarcerated in Louisiana are in prison for nonviolent, poverty-related property and drug crimes; and

WHEREAS, in order to lower female recidivism rates, it is therefore crucial that women be provided with opportunities to receive adequate job training in industries where they can earn a living wage upon release; and

WHEREAS, at present, women prisoners at Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women are only offered training in culinary arts and upholstery, while male inmates in the Louisiana prison system have the option to receive training in more lucrative, high-demand craft occupations that can help them successfully support themselves and their families upon release; and

WHEREAS, the commission respectfully recommends that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections align all of its job training across the prison system to high-demand, high-wage jobs in a gender-neutral manner to help women attain jobs upon release that offer them financial independence and reduce their likelihood of reoffending.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to align its job training programs across all prison systems to high-demand, high-wage jobs in a gender-neutral manner to assist women in attaining such jobs upon release.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE