

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 14

BY SENATOR MORRISH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To continue and provide with respect to the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Department of Children and Family Services, created in the 2014 Regular Session pursuant to Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 69.

WHEREAS, according to the Rape Abuse and Incest National Network, forty-four percent of sexual assault and rape victims are under the age of eighteen and fifteen percent are under the age of twelve; and

WHEREAS, girls ages sixteen to nineteen are four times more likely than the general population to be victims of rape, attempted rape, or sexual assault; and

WHEREAS, ninety-three percent of juvenile sexual assault victims know their attacker and thirty-four percent of those attackers were family members; and

WHEREAS, one of these victims who was sexually abused by a neighbor and family member was Erin Merryn of Illinois, who became instrumental in passing a law, now referred to as "Erin's Law"; and

WHEREAS, Erin has promoted child sexual abuse awareness throughout the United States, as well as establishing "Erin's Law" in other states; and

WHEREAS, establishing a task force on the prevention of sexual abuse of children has been an essential first step to enacting Erin's Law in other states and for that reason the 2014 Regular Session approved Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 69, which is to be continued and provided for herein; and

WHEREAS, in establishing this task force in 2014, the legislature signaled its support of legislation similar to "Erin's Law" in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, in the effort to encourage those involved in the prevention of sexual abuse of children and to inspire a genuine effort to protect children in the state of Louisiana, this task force is an important vehicle for focusing the attention of the legislature, state government, and the public on the difficult issue of the sexual abuse of children; and

WHEREAS, the work of this task force should be continued in order to fulfill its

original mandate to provide a road map guiding Louisiana toward eventual elimination of the sexual abuse of children in our state; and

WHEREAS, the importance of this task force cannot be overstated and each entity that is charged to nominate a member of this group is urged to consider the magnitude of the job the task force is to undertake and to measure their commitment to this task force accordingly.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby continue until 2017 the Task Force on the Prevention of Sexual Abuse of Children within the Department of Children and Family Services, which shall provide staff for this important undertaking, incorporating the amendments contained herein.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the membership of the task force shall continue, except as the following list varies from the membership list provided in Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 69 of the 2014 Regular Session:

- (1) One member of the Senate appointed by the president of the Senate.
- (2) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.
- (3) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, or his designee.
- (4) The state Superintendent of Education, or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals, or his designee.
- (6) The Executive Director of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Louisiana Association, or his designee.
- (7) One representative of an organization representing law enforcement, appointed by the superintendent of state police.
- (8) One representative of a statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Association of Educators.
- (9) One representative of a different statewide professional teachers' organization, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers.
- (10) One representative of an organization involved in the prevention of child abuse in the state, appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

(11) One representative of an organization representing school management in this state, appointed by the head of the Louisiana Association of School Board Executives.

(12) Two members of the public appointed by the president of the Senate.

(13) Two members of the public appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

(14) The child welfare program director from the Department of Children and Family Services, or his designee.

(15) The Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the task force should be individuals who are actively involved in the fields of the prevention of child abuse and neglect and child welfare. The appointment of members should reflect the geographic and racial diversity of the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the first meeting of the task force shall be called by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services to be held on or before September 1, 2015.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at the first meeting of the task force, a presiding officer shall be elected by a majority vote of the membership. Thereafter, the task force shall meet at the call of the presiding officer.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall make recommendations for reducing child abuse in Louisiana. In making those recommendations, the task force shall:

(1) Gather information concerning child sexual abuse throughout the state.

(2) Receive reports and testimony from individuals, state and local agencies, community-based organizations, and other public and private organizations.

(3) Create goals for state policy that would prevent child sexual abuse.

(4) Submit a final report with its recommendations to the legislature by January 1, 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the recommendations may include proposals for specific statutory changes and methods to foster cooperation among state agencies and between the state and local governments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consult with employees of the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Justice, the office of state police within the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Department of Education, and any other state agency or department as necessary to accomplish the task force's responsibilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled as members of the constituent organizations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be abolished upon submission of the report to the legislature on January 1, 2017.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services and Erin Merryn.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES