

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 482

BY REPRESENTATIVE JEFFERSON

CHILDREN/FOSTER CARE: Creates a task force to recommend means by which the state may better facilitate permanency for foster children

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 35-A of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be
3 comprised of R.S. 46:2431 through 2434, relative to foster care; to create and
4 provide for the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force; to provide for the
5 composition, functions, and duties of the task force; to provide for termination of the
6 task force; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. Chapter 35-A of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,
9 comprised of R.S. 46:2431 through 2434, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 CHAPTER 35-A. FOSTER CARE AND PERMANENCE TASK FORCE

11 §2431. Declaration; purpose

12 A. The legislature hereby declares that the interests of the most vulnerable
13 children of this state are best served through policies designed to create lasting
14 connections for children who spend time in the state's foster care system.

15 B. The purpose of this Chapter is to create and provide for a task force to
16 study and make recommendations concerning best practices for achieving
17 permanency for foster children.

18 §2432. Task Force; creation; composition; meetings

19 A. There is hereby created the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force,
20 referred to hereafter as the "task force", which shall be composed of the following
21 members:

1 (1) Two members representing the Department of Children and Family
2 Services appointed by the secretary of the department, one of whom shall be a
3 representative of the Kinship Foster Care Program of the office of children and
4 family services.

5 (2) The dean of the Southern University Nelson Mandela School of Public
6 Policy or his designee.

7 (3) The director of the Louisiana State University School of Social Work or
8 his designee.

9 (4) The executive director of the National Association of Social Workers,
10 Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.

11 (5) The president of LouisianaChildren.org or his designee.

12 (6) The executive director of the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent
13 Association or his designee.

14 B. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services shall
15 take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the initial convening of the task
16 force occurs no later than October 1, 2016.

17 C. The task force members shall select a chairman annually, and he shall
18 serve as chairman without salary.

19 D. Task force members shall serve without compensation, except per diem
20 or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled by their
21 respective employer organizations.

22 E. The task force shall hold at least two public meetings each year at a place
23 designated by the chairman.

24 §2433. Functions and duties of the task force

25 A. The functions of the task force shall include all of the following:

26 (1) Examination of means and best practices to ensure that foster children
27 and adoptive children are placed in homes that become permanent and comfortable
28 homes, thereby reducing the number of children who are moved repeatedly into
29 foster homes and adoptive arrangements.

1 (2) Identification of means by which to evaluate the motivations of persons
2 applying to be foster parents to ensure that the applicants are motivated by reasons
3 that are in the best interest of children.

4 (3) Examination of means and best practices to encourage recruitment and
5 retention of foster parents who practice foster care for reasons that are good for
6 children.

7 (4) Examination of means to facilitate provision to foster parents and
8 adoptive parents of all available information about a foster child's behavior before
9 the child is placed with the foster or adoptive parents.

10 (5) Recommendation of means by which to ensure that adoption subsidies
11 remain sufficient to meet the needs of an adoptive child and his adoptive parents as
12 the child grows older.

13 (6) Recommendation of means by which to improve the rate of permanency
14 among young people who are fourteen years of age or older and are in the state foster
15 care system or in residential placement.

16 (7) Recommendations for a process to mediate conflicts between foster or
17 adoptive parents and child placement agencies or biological parents.

18 B. On or before December 31, 2017, and semiannually thereafter, the task
19 force shall prepare and submit to the governor and the legislature a report on the
20 status and well-being of children in foster care, with a particular focus on any
21 policies and practices which are facilitating or could likely facilitate a greater degree
22 of permanency for foster children. The report shall include any findings and
23 recommendations derived from the functions specified in Subsection A of this
24 Section.

25 §2434. Termination

26 The provisions of this Chapter shall terminate on January 1, 2018, and
27 thereafter shall be null, void, and without effect.

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)]

HB 482 Original

2016 Regular Session

Jefferson

Abstract: Creates a seven-member Foster Care and Permanence Task Force to recommend to the governor and the legislature means by which the state may better facilitate permanency for foster children.

Proposed law creates the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force, referred to hereafter as the "task force". Provides that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) Two members representing the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) appointed by the secretary of the department, one of whom shall be a representative of the Kinship Foster Care Program.
- (2) The dean of the Southern University Nelson Mandela School of Public Policy or his designee.
- (3) The director of the Louisiana State University School of Social Work or his designee.
- (4) The executive director of the National Association of Social Workers, Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.
- (5) The president of LouisianaChildren.org or his designee.
- (6) The executive director of the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent Association or his designee.

Proposed law requires the DCFS secretary to take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the initial convening of the task force occurs no later than October 1, 2016.

Proposed law provides that the task force members shall select a chairman annually who shall serve as chairman without salary; and that the members shall serve without compensation, except per diem or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled by their respective employer organizations.

Proposed law requires the task force to hold at least two public meetings each year at a place designated by the chairman.

Proposed law provides that the functions of the task force shall include all of the following:

- (1) Examination of means and best practices to ensure that foster children and adoptive children are placed in homes that become permanent and comfortable homes, thereby reducing the number of children who are moved repeatedly into foster homes and adoptive arrangements.
- (2) Identification of means by which to evaluate the motivations of persons applying to be foster parents to ensure that the applicants are motivated by reasons that are in the best interest of children.
- (3) Examination of means and best practices to encourage recruitment and retention of foster parents who practice foster care for reasons that are good for children.

- (4) Examination of means to facilitate provision to foster parents and adoptive parents of all available information about a foster child's behavior before the child is placed with the foster or adoptive parents.
- (5) Recommendation of means by which to ensure that adoption subsidies remain sufficient to meet the needs of an adoptive child and his adoptive parents as the child grows older.
- (6) Recommendation of means by which to improve the rate of permanency among young people who are fourteen years of age or older and are in the state foster care system or in residential placement.
- (7) Recommendations for a process to mediate conflicts between foster or adoptive parents and child placement agencies or biological parents.

Proposed law requires that on or before Dec. 31, 2017, and semiannually thereafter, the task force shall prepare and submit to the governor and the legislature a report on the status and well-being of children in foster care, with a particular focus on any policies and practices which are facilitating or could likely facilitate a greater degree of permanency for foster children.

Proposed law terminates on Jan. 1, 2018.

(Adds R.S. 46:2431-2434)