

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 117

BY SENATOR MILLS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend the Louisiana Supreme Court on the success of the specialty drug court program and to request information on the drug court program and other statutorily created specialty courts.

WHEREAS, in 1997, the Louisiana Legislature recognized the critical need for criminal justice system programs to reduce the incidence of alcohol and drug abuse, addiction, and crimes committed as a result of alcohol and drug use by creating the specialty alcohol and drug treatment divisions in the various district courts of the state; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Supreme Court has done an exemplary job of implementing and expanding the drug courts throughout our state with fifty operational drug court programs, forty of which have been operational for ten or more years; and

WHEREAS, the success of the drug court program is evident in that since its inception more than 12,500 individuals have graduated from the program, a total of 593 drug-free babies were born to drug court participants for an estimated savings of more than \$12.2 million in health related expenditures and 89.8% of 2012 graduates remained free of additional convictions three years after graduation; and

WHEREAS, there are additional specialty courts which have been established by the legislature, namely the mental health court, veterans court, and reentry court; and

WHEREAS, all of the specialty courts are designed to address the underlying clinical and social needs of individuals entering the criminal justice system for nonviolent offenses by overseeing treatment and training mandates that allows the individual to comply with certain requirements as a condition of incarceration avoidance, sentence suspension, or supervised probation; and

WHEREAS, the implementation of specialty courts is a cost-effective alternative to incarceration and improves the lives of the participants and their families by providing a foundation for long-term personal and professional stability and success in the community; and

WHEREAS, the district court judges who preside over these specialty courts do so in addition to their regular dockets, without any extra compensation, because they have a passion for helping people and are often the sole source of support and encouragement for the participants, motivating and inspiring them to follow the requirements needed to achieve graduation; and

WHEREAS, because the drug court program is currently operational in fifty locations throughout Louisiana and is recognized as one of the best and most progressive in the country, it is the desire of the legislature to see it expand even further; and

WHEREAS, it is also the desire of the legislature to see the mental health court, veterans court, and reentry court expanded throughout Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Louisiana Supreme Court on the success of the specialty drug court program and requests that the Louisiana Supreme Court submit a report to the legislature no later than February 1, 2017, to include information on plans and proposals to expand the drug court program and the status of implementation and plans for expansion of the mental health court, veterans court, and reentry court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the report should also identify opportunities for funding or abilities to use local revenue to draw down federal matching dollars to help sustain the specialty court programs along with any recommendations for legislation to be filed in the 2017 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Louisiana Supreme Court.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES