

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 84

BY REPRESENTATIVE FOIL

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the feasibility of issuing a certification card denoting that a person has been medically diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder and to report its findings and recommendations to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare not later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature.

WHEREAS, autism spectrum disorder refers to a broad range of conditions characterized by challenges with social skills, repetitive behaviors, and speech and nonverbal communication; and

WHEREAS, autism is known as a "spectrum" disorder because there is wide variation in the type and severity of symptoms people experience; and

WHEREAS, there is not one autism but many subtypes, most influenced by a combination of genetic and environmental factors; and

WHEREAS, individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder have difficulty with social communication and interaction, restricted interests, and repetitive behaviors; and

WHEREAS, each person diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder has a distinct set of strengths and challenges; and

WHEREAS, the ways in which people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder learn, think, and problem-solve can range from highly skilled to severely challenged; and

WHEREAS, some people diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder may require significant support in their daily lives, while others may need less support and, in some cases, live entirely independently; and

WHEREAS, while scientists do not know the exact causes of autism spectrum disorder, research suggests that genes can act together with influences from the environment to affect development in ways that lead to autism spectrum disorder; and

WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, autism spectrum disorder affects an estimated one in fifty-nine children in the United States today; and

WHEREAS, there is a need for Louisiana to address the current policies surrounding individuals with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis to ensure they have protections and are not treated unfairly as a result of their diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, upon the request of a person medically diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder or his guardian or caregiver, a certification card may be presented to law enforcement or in other circumstances as established by the Louisiana Department of Health.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to study the feasibility of issuing a certification card to individuals with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis that they may carry on their person and present in certain circumstances.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall, in its study, consider the following:

(1) The need for inclusion on the certification card of certain information including but not limited to:

(a) The name of the person to whom the certification card is registered with a corresponding card number to be issued by the Louisiana Department of Health.

(b) Emergency contact information for the cardholder.

(c) Information necessary to indicate that the cardholder has an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

(d) Information necessary to explain that an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis is a medical condition that may impair an individual's ability to communicate, may interfere with his ability to understand directions and respond, and may cause agitation when the individual is touched or approached closely.

(e) Information necessary to explain that certain behaviors are a result of an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis and are not an intentional refusal to cooperate or intentional defiance.

(f) A reference to a website or local organization that can provide more information about an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

(2) The inclusion of an official seal on the card.

(3) The cost for the initial issuance of the card as well as the cost for a replacement card.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Department of Health shall submit a written report of its findings, recommendations, and proposed legislation, if necessary, to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare no later than sixty days prior to the convening of the 2020 Regular Session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE