

2021 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 151

BY SENATORS BARROW, ALLAIN, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, JOHNS, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, PEACOCK, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, TALBOT, TARVER, WARD, WHITE AND WOMACK AND REPRESENTATIVES FREEMAN, MARCELLE AND MOORE

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

CHILDREN. Enacts the Foster Youth's Bill of Rights for youth ages fourteen through eighteen in foster care. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT
2 To enact Subpart D-1A of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes
3 of 1950, to be comprised of R.S. 46:286.16, relative to youth in foster care; to create
4 the Foster Youth's Bill of Rights; to provide for rights of youth in foster care; to
5 provide for an effective date; and to provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. Subpart D-1A of Part II of Chapter 3 of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised
8 Statutes of 1950, comprised of R.S. 46:286.16, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

9 **SUBPART D-1A. FOSTER YOUTH'S BILL OF RIGHTS**

10 **§286.16. Short title; purpose; rights**

11 **A. This Subpart shall be cited as the "Foster Youth's Bill of Rights".**

12 **B. The Department of Children and Family Services shall implement,**
13 **promote, and support the rights contained in this Section through the policies**
14 **and practices of the department as applied to youth ages fourteen through**
15 **eighteen who are in foster care in this state.**

16 **C. Youth ages fourteen through eighteen in foster care in this state are**
17 **entitled to the following rights granted to them when it is determined by the**

1 department to be in the best interest of the youth:

2 (1) The right to privacy concerning the youth's personal and confidential
3 information.

4 (2) The right to attend all court hearings regarding the care to be
5 received.

6 (3) The right to be in a stable and supportive setting that is free from
7 neglect and emotional, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse or exploitation, and
8 that is the least restrictive to meet the youth's needs.

9 (4) The right to participate in all case plan meetings, to include
10 supportive adults of the youth's choice to be on the planning team, and to be
11 provided a copy of the youth's case plan every six months or whenever changes
12 are made to the plan.

13 (5) The right to have the youth's medical and mental health needs met
14 on a regular and timely basis.

15 (6) The right to be provided adequate trauma-based counseling and
16 therapeutic services throughout the youth's time in foster care.

17 (7) The right to be provided the contact information of the youth's
18 caseworker, attorney, and CASA volunteer, and to attend meetings with them
19 on a regular basis.

20 (8) The right to have access to a telephone to talk to or visit with
21 approved friends and relatives, including siblings, at least once a month.

22 (9) The right to access materials necessary for school and to further the
23 youth's education, including access to a computer or other electronic devices
24 and to the internet when needed to complete assignments, the right to receive
25 tutoring services, and the right to a access information regarding college
26 admissions.

27 (10) The right to access information regarding testing accommodations
28 for any learning or developmental disability or special health need.

29 (11) The right to be involved in extracurricular activities, including

1 school clubs, dances, field trips, sports teams, and to be provided with supplies
2 and uniforms required for team participation.

3 (12) The right to remain in the youth's school of origin.

4 (13) The right to attend a driver's education class.

5 (14) The right to obtain employment and transportation to employment
6 within the vicinity of foster care placement.

7 (15) The right to refuse involvement in religious-based activities and the
8 right to continue the youth's cultural, religious, and ethnic traditions and belief
9 systems.

10 (16) The right to be free from discrimination of any kind on the basis of
11 the child's or his parent's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other
12 opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other
13 status.

14 (17) The right to attend and have transportation to services, events, and
15 activities provided by the Independent Living Skills Program within the youth's
16 region, the right to receive timely notification of upcoming youth advocacy and
17 engagement services in the youth's region, and the right to be provided with the
18 entire amount of the monthly allowance as outlined in department policy.

19 (18) The right to express and voice the youth's needs, concerns, and
20 desires about foster care.

21 Section 2. This Act shall be known and may be cited as "The Louisiana Elite
22 Advocacy Force Act" or "The LEAF Act".

23 Section 3. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
24 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
25 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
26 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
27 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument was prepared by Brandi Cannon. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

DIGEST

SB 151 Reengrossed

2021 Regular Session

Barrow

Proposed law enacts a "Foster Youth's Bill of Rights" to be implemented through the policies and practices of the Department of Children and Family Services for certain youth in foster care in the state.

Proposed law enumerates rights for youth in foster care who are ages 14-18 involving privacy; participation in planning for care including attending court hearings and case plan meetings; a stable and supportive setting free from neglect and abuse or exploitation; having medical and mental health needs met on a regular and timely basis; meeting with the youth's caseworker, attorney, and CASA volunteer; access to materials necessary for school and to further the youth's education; extracurricular activities; the youth's cultural, religious, and ethnic traditions and belief systems; participation in the Independent Living Skills Program within the youth's region; and the expression and voicing of the youth's needs, concerns, and desires about foster care.

Proposed law provides the Act shall be known as "The Louisiana Elite Advocacy Force Act" or "The LEAF Act".

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 46:286.16)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by SenateCommittee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Prohibits discrimination of any kind on the basis of the child's or his parent's race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic, or social origin, property, disability, birth, or other status.

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Names the Act "The Louisiana Elite Advocacy Force Act" or "The LEAF Act".