

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 97

BY REPRESENTATIVE JONES

PARDON/PAROLE: Requests a study of case law and best practices to better understand other approaches to parole

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request that the Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the
3 Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and
4 Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center to study
5 the history of parole in Louisiana, analyze current parole laws and regulations, and
6 report their findings to the Legislature of Louisiana no later than February 1, 2022.

7 WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the country,
8 with approximately thirty thousand individuals in state prison; and

9 WHEREAS, the average age of those in prison is forty and one-half years; and

10 WHEREAS, one of every five persons in Louisiana prisons is serving life without
11 the possibility of parole; and

12 WHEREAS, in addition, Louisiana has tens of thousands of individuals under parole
13 supervision; and

14 WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana entered into a bi-partisan justice
15 reinvestment process, as advanced by the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, that resulted in
16 legislation to decrease Louisiana's prison population and to end Louisiana's title as the state
17 with the highest incarceration rate in the country; and

18 WHEREAS, Louisiana has decreased its prison population, but not enough to change
19 its title as the state with the highest incarceration rate; and

20 WHEREAS, the national prison population decreased three percent between 2019
21 and 2020, while Louisiana's prison population decreased two point four percent; and

1 WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana has made many reforms to the state's parole
2 system, including reforms passed as part of the 2017 justice reinvestment legislation; and

3 WHEREAS, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative also sought to reduce the number of
4 individuals on supervised release and reduce the caseload of probation and parole officers;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, despite the success of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, Louisiana still
7 provides unequal parole opportunities due to conflicting laws; and

8 WHEREAS, Louisiana's laws have developed over centuries and have become
9 inconsistent; and

10 WHEREAS, there is a collection of state laws that govern parole eligibility; and

11 WHEREAS, states across the country are looking to reform their parole systems to
12 ensure these systems are equitable and just; and

13 WHEREAS, Voice of the Experienced is a Louisiana membership organization
14 established by and for persons who are directly impacted by the criminal justice system,
15 including incarcerated persons and their family members, persons under community
16 supervision, and persons living with the lifelong impacts of criminal convictions; and

17 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Parole Project is a non-profit organization working to
18 enhance public safety through advocacy, programming, and services for persons who have
19 served long prison sentences so that they may reach their full potential; and

20 WHEREAS, the Promise of Justice Initiative is a non-profit organization working
21 to create positive change for individuals in the criminal legal system at the intersection of
22 impact litigation, direct services, and community engagement; and

23 WHEREAS, Louisiana Survivors for Reform is a coalition of crime survivors,
24 families of homicide victims, and organizations creating change in the criminal justice
25 system; and

26 WHEREAS, the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M.
27 Hebert Law Center provides law students the opportunity to represent and assist individuals
28 in parole and pardon matters.

1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
2 urge and request Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole Project, the Promise of
3 Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at
4 Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center to study the history of parole in
5 Louisiana, analyze current parole laws and regulations, and propose recommendations to
6 create a more uniform parole system.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole
8 Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and
9 Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center may work with
10 and receive information from various stakeholders in the criminal justice system, including
11 but not limited to representatives of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the
12 Board of Pardons, the committee on parole, and other relevant state agencies and institutions.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole
14 Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and
15 Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center may also study
16 relevant case law and best practices to better understand other approaches to parole in the
17 state and federal systems.

18 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Voice of the Experienced, the Louisiana Parole
19 Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, Louisiana Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and
20 Re-entry Clinic at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center shall report their
21 findings to the Legislature of Louisiana no later than February 1, 2022.

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
23 executive director of the Voice of the Experienced, the president of the Louisiana Parole
24 Project, the executive director of the Promise of Justice Initiative, the organizer of Louisiana
25 Survivors for Reform, and the supervising faculty member of the Parole and Re-entry Clinic
26 at Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one print copy and one electronic copy of any
28 report produced pursuant to this Resolution shall be submitted to the David R. Poynter
29 Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:772.

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)]

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Jones

Requests the Voice of the Experienced, the La. Parole Project, the Promise of Justice Initiative, La. Survivors for Reform, and the Parole and Re-entry Clinic at La. State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center to study the history of parole in La., applicable case law, and any relevant practices, and to submit a report to the La. Legislature.