

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 107

BY SENATORS HEWITT, BARROW AND BOUDREAUX

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the legislative auditor to conduct an efficiency audit of the Department of Children and Family Services' administration of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program.

WHEREAS, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federal program which began in 1997 to provide time-limited assistance to families with children when the parents or other responsible relatives were unable to provide for the family's basic needs; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has established four goals of the TANF program including to provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; to end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families; and

WHEREAS, states have broad flexibility to achieve these goals and carry out their TANF programs, including the type and amount of assistance payments, the range of services provided, and participant eligibility determinations; and

WHEREAS, according to The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, in 2019 Louisiana spent about \$187 million in federal and state funds under the TANF program; and

WHEREAS, The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities also noted that Louisiana ranks 40th among the states and the District of Columbia for percentage of TANF funds spent on basic assistance; and

WHEREAS, in July 2020, The Pew Charitable Trusts released a critical article that cited several states, including Louisiana, for using TANF funds for purposes other than its initial intended purpose; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Children and Family Services, DCFS, is the administrator of the Louisiana TANF program; and

WHEREAS, in order for the legislature to ensure that DCFS is complying with the federal goals of the TANF program and being a good steward of taxpayer dollars used to implement the TANF program, a thorough efficiency audit is necessary; and

WHEREAS, through an efficiency audit, the legislative auditor will investigate the implementation and administration of the TANF program for the purpose of assessing the fiscal management of the program, efficiency of resource utilization, and effectiveness of state efforts at achieving the four goals of the program.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the legislative auditor to conduct an efficiency audit of the Department of Children and Family Services' administration of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, as part of the 2021 Louisiana Performance Audit Program.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the audit shall be completed no later than January 1, 2022, and shall be transmitted to the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the legislative auditor and the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE