

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 32

BY SENATOR BARROW

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To re-create and continue the work of the task force to study health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region and to require the task force to report findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on health and welfare.

WHEREAS, profound changes in health care delivery and financing in Baton Rouge have occurred in the past several years, dramatically impacting access to care in the city and surrounding region; and

WHEREAS, these changes include the closure in 2013 of the city's state-owned public hospital, the Earl K. Long Medical Center, and privatization of the services formerly delivered there; the closure of the city's mental health emergency room extension, which was part of the Earl K. Long Medical Center and kept patients with mental illness from congesting hospital emergency departments and jails; and a temporary closure of the emergency department of the Baton Rouge General Medical Center's Mid-City hospital due to its inability to cover the cost of treating the overwhelming number of uninsured patients that it began to see in the aftermath of the closure of Earl K. Long; and

WHEREAS, as evidenced by the final passage of House Bill No. 1493 of the 2010 Regular Session requiring reports to the legislature relative to privatization of services of the Earl K. Long Medical Center, which was the first of nine hospitals in the state's ten-hospital system to be privatized, and by extensive debate concerning the state health system in every session since 2010, the legislature has expressed deep concern about the fiscal and public health consequences of hospital privatization since the outset of the privatization efforts; and

WHEREAS, the executive budget for the state proposed for state fiscal year 2015-2016 lacked sufficient funds for Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, the private partner now responsible for the indigent care and physician training services that had formerly been delivered at Earl K. Long, to continue delivering the services which it is obligated to provide pursuant to its cooperative endeavor agreement with the state; and

WHEREAS, after the 2015-2016 executive budget was issued, officials with Our Lady of the Lake determined that the seven million four hundred thousand dollar shortfall in public funding it faced originally for provision of publicly-required services had doubled to approximately fifteen million dollars due to increased emergency department utilization resulting from the closure of the Baton Rouge General Mid-City emergency department; and

WHEREAS, supply of, and demand for, medical care in the capital region have become increasingly misaligned in recent years; and

WHEREAS, these circumstances are of serious concern to policymakers at the city, regional, and state levels; and

WHEREAS, a task force to study health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region was created by House Concurrent Resolution No. 129 of the 2015 Regular Session of the legislature and continued by Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 4 of the 2016 Regular Session and Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 122 of the 2018 Regular Session; and

WHEREAS, legislative authority for the task force terminated on December 31, 2019; however, the efforts of this task force are vitally important at present and will remain so in the near term.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby re-create and continue the work of the task force to study and make recommendations concerning health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

- (1) The mayor-president of East Baton Rouge Parish or his designee.
- (2) The chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation or his designee.
- (3) Two members representing the Capital Region Legislative Delegation.
- (4) The chief executive officer of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center or his designee.
- (5) The chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge General Health System or his designee.
- (6) The chief executive officer of Lane Regional Medical Center or his designee.

- (7) The chief executive officer of Ochsner Health System or his designee.
- (8) The coroner of East Baton Rouge Parish or his designee.
- (9) The administrator of East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services or his designee.
- (10) The chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber or his designee.
- (11) The president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO or his designee.
- (12) The lead organizer of Together Baton Rouge or his designee.
- (13) The president of the Capital Area Medical Society or his designee.
- (14) One member representing the Campaign for Healthcare for Everyone - Louisiana.
- (15) The president of the Louisiana Center for Health Equity or his designee.
- (16) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health or his designee.
- (17) The director of the Louisiana Budget Project or his designee.
- (18) The chairman of the board of directors of Woman's Hospital Foundation or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall examine issues related to health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region including, without limitation, the following:

- (1) Barriers to access to health care faced by low- to moderate-income persons.
- (2) Impacts of cuts to federal disproportionate share hospital funding and Louisiana's expansion of Medicaid in 2016 on patient access to health services.
- (3) Effects on public health of the closure of the state-operated public hospital in Baton Rouge and privatization of the services formerly delivered there.
- (4) Impacts on private hospitals which do not operate under a cooperative endeavor agreement with the state for providing uncompensated care.
- (5) Policies which could expand the capacity of public and private urgent care clinics to meet the health care needs of medically underserved populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at its initial meeting, the task force shall elect a chairperson from among its members and shall adopt rules of procedure and any other policies as may be necessary to facilitate its work.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit an initial report to the Senate and House committees on health and welfare on or before December 31, 2021, outlining the work and recommendations of the task force to date and providing a plan for ongoing study of the issue of health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a final report to the Senate and House committees on health and welfare on or before the termination date of the task force on December 31, 2022, with final recommendations of the task force regarding the issue of health services delivery and financing in the Baton Rouge region.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that legislative authority for the task force shall continue through December 31, 2022.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the mayor-president of East Baton Rouge Parish, the chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Foundation, the chief executive officer of Our Lady of the Lake Regional Medical Center, the chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge General Health System, the chief executive officer of Lane Regional Medical Center, the chief executive officer of Ochsner Health System, the coroner of East Baton Rouge Parish, the administrator of East Baton Rouge Parish Emergency Medical Services, the chief executive officer of the Baton Rouge Area Chamber, the president of the Louisiana AFL-CIO, the lead organizer of Together Baton Rouge, the president of the Capital Area Medical Society, the president of the Campaign for Healthcare for Everyone - Louisiana, the president of the Louisiana Center for Health Equity, the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health, the director of the Louisiana Budget Project, and the chairman of the board of directors of Woman's Hospital Foundation.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES