

2023 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 64

BY SENATORS FESI, ALLAIN, BERNARD, BOUIE, CARTER, CLOUD, CONNICK, DUPLESSIS, FOIL, HENRY, HEWITT, JACKSON, KLEINPETER, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, WHITE AND WOMACK

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

CHILDREN. Creates Ezekiel's Law and provides relative to protecting children from abuse. (8/1/23)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 46:2605(B)(12) and (22) and 2607, relative to protecting children from abuse;

3 to provide for membership on the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board; to provide for

4 the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee; to provide for legislative findings;

5 to provide for the membership, quorum, officers, and meetings of the subcommittee;

6 to provide for recommendations by the subcommittee; to provide for designation of

7 this Act as "Ezekiel's Law"; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. R.S. 46:2605(B)(12) and (22) and 2607 are hereby enacted to read as

10 follows:

11 §2605. Children's Cabinet Advisory Board

12 * * *

13 B. The advisory board shall be composed of the following members:

14 * * *

15 **(12) The assistant secretary of the office on women's health and**

16 **community health, or his designee.**

17 * * *

1 (22) The chairman of the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee,
 2 or his designee.

3 * * *

4 §2607. Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee

5 A. The legislature hereby finds all of the following:

6 (1) Child abuse is a community problem. No single agency has the
 7 training, manpower, resources, or legal mandate to intervene effectively in all
 8 child abuse cases. No one agency has the sole responsibility for dealing with
 9 abused children.

10 (2) Effective community intervention involves the formation of a child
 11 protection partnership that includes professionals who understand and
 12 appreciate the different roles, responsibilities, strengths, and weaknesses of the
 13 other members but cooperate and coordinate their efforts.

14 (3) The most effective approach to cases involving child abuse is
 15 interagency coordination and planning. All partners in protecting children must
 16 work together with a common concern for the welfare of the child and with a
 17 common goal to communicate with mutual respect.

18 (4) Effective teamwork includes having a mechanism for the partner
 19 agencies to discuss and, if possible, resolve any issues that arise.

20 (5) An ongoing discussion of problems that the partners in protecting
 21 children encounter during investigations will help resolve them and will also
 22 clarify the roles and responsibilities of the partner agencies.

23 B. The Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee is established
 24 within the Children's Cabinet to provide a forum for public agencies whose
 25 duties include responding to and investigating matters involving child abuse or
 26 neglect. The subcommittee shall meet to consider policies and procedures for
 27 responding to and investigating alleged child abuse with the goal of efficient
 28 coordination of services and the chief objectives being to determine what
 29 problems arise and how to meet the needs of the child.

1 C.(1) The subcommittee shall be composed of the following members:

2 (a) A representative of the Louisiana State Police, appointed by the
3 superintendent.

4 (b) A representative of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, appointed by
5 the executive director.

6 (c) A representative of the Louisiana Association of Chiefs of Police,
7 appointed by the president of the organization.

8 (d) A representative of the Louisiana District Attorneys Association,
9 appointed by the executive director.

10 (e) A representative from the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family
11 Court Judges.

12 (f) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services, or
13 his designee.

14 (2) The Children's Cabinet may appoint from time to time, to serve at its
15 pleasure, additional members to serve on matters about which the additional
16 members have expertise or experience.

17 (3) Members shall serve without compensation, except for per diem or
18 reimbursement of expenses to which they may be entitled as members of their
19 respective organizations.

20 D. A majority of the total membership shall constitute a quorum of the
21 subcommittee, and any official action taken by the subcommittee shall require
22 an affirmative vote of the majority of the quorum present and voting.

23 E. The subcommittee shall elect a chairman and any other officers
24 deemed necessary from among the membership.

25 F. The subcommittee shall meet at least once per quarter upon the call
26 of the executive director of the Children's Cabinet.

27 G. The subcommittee shall make recommendations to the Children's
28 Cabinet, through the executive director, as determined necessary by the
29 subcommittee. The subcommittee may include in its recommendations a request

1 **for legislation, as appropriate.**

2 Section 2. This Act shall be known and may be cited as "Ezekiel's Law".

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Brandi Cannon.

DIGEST

SB 64 Reengrossed

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Present law provides for the Children's Cabinet to coordinate and focus programs and funding for services to children and their families. Present law further provides for the Children's Cabinet Advisory Board to provide information and recommendations from the perspective of advocacy groups, service providers, and parents and provides for the membership of the board. Proposed law retains present law and adds as members the assistant secretary of the office on women's health and community health and the chairman of the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee.

Proposed law establishes the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee to provide a forum for public agencies whose duties include responding to and investigating matters involving child abuse or neglect. Proposed law provides that the subcommittee shall consider policies and procedures for responding to and investigating alleged child abuse with the goal of efficient coordination of services. Proposed law further provides for the membership, quorum, officers, and meetings of the subcommittee.

Proposed law provides for the subcommittee to make recommendations to the Children's Cabinet, through the executive director, as determined necessary by the subcommittee, and which may include a request for legislation, as appropriate.

Proposed law shall be known and may be cited as "Ezekiel's Law".

Effective August 1, 2023.

(Adds R.S. 46:2605(12) and (22) and 2607)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Health and Welfare to the original bill

1. Remove the four proposed members to the advisory board.
2. Add the assistant secretary of the office on women's health and community health and the chairman of the Partners in Protecting Children Subcommittee as members to the advisory board.
3. Add a representative from the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges as a member of the subcommittee.
4. Make technical changes.

Senate Floor Amendments to engrossed bill

1. Make technical changes.