

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 174

BY REPRESENTATIVES FREEMAN, GOUDEAU, KNOX, AND LAFLEUR

CORRECTIONS: Creates a task force to study the educational programs in the prisons and jails of this state

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To create a task force to study both the academic and vocational educational programs
3 within prisons and jails in Louisiana.

4 WHEREAS, on June 30, 2022, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections held
5 approximately twenty-five thousand six hundred seventy-seven individuals in its custody,
6 in addition to one thousand three hundred ninety-five women; and

7 WHEREAS, approximately fourteen thousand one hundred fifty-seven individuals
8 are housed in parish jails; and

9 WHEREAS, six percent of incarcerated individuals are in transitional work
10 programs; and

11 WHEREAS, in 2021, there were twelve thousand, one hundred ninety-one new
12 admissions to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, of which thirteen percent
13 were under twenty-five years of age, twelve percent were over fifty years of age, ten percent
14 were women, and twenty-one percent were for violent crimes; and

15 WHEREAS, of these new admissions, sixty-five percent were parole eligible and
16 ninety-one percent were eligible for good time parole supervision; and

17 WHEREAS, in 2021, fifty-two parishes sentenced at least fifty individuals to prison,
18 thirty-three parishes sentenced at least one hundred individuals to prison, and sixteen
19 parishes sentenced at least two hundred individuals to prison; and

20 WHEREAS, in 2021, the nine leading parishes relative to sentencing are Caddo
21 Parish with one thousand one hundred six, Jefferson Parish with nine hundred thirty-six, St.

1 Tammany with six hundred sixty-nine, Calcasieu with sixty hundred twenty, East Baton
2 Rouge with five hundred ninety-nine, Bossier and Ouachita with five hundred twelve,
3 Livingston with four hundred eighty-six, and Orleans with four hundred sixty-one; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2021, there were twelve thousand five hundred seventy-two
5 individuals released from state custody; and

6 WHEREAS, the overwhelming majority of those individuals return to where they
7 consider to be home or where they have opportunity and support; and

8 WHEREAS, in 2021, forty-nine parishes received over fifty individuals from
9 custody, thirty-three parishes received at least one hundred individuals, sixteen parishes
10 received over two hundred individuals; and

11 WHEREAS, of those sixteen parishes, Orleans received nine hundred eighty-three
12 individuals, Caddo received nine hundred eighty-one individuals, Jefferson received nine
13 hundred forty-seven individuals, East Baton Rouge received seven hundred forty-nine
14 individuals, St. Tammany received six hundred sixty-six individuals, and Ouachita received
15 five hundred twelve individuals; and

16 WHEREAS, Louisiana recidivism rates, including revocations of supervision, vary
17 based on from where an individual was released, with the highest rates of return to custody
18 being from parish jails at thirty-two percent, transitional work programs at twenty-eight
19 percent, and state prisons at twenty-five percent over three years; and

20 WHEREAS, this disparity in recidivism rates has remained consistent across years
21 of release, and the reduced rate for those who have obtained an education has reached
22 sixteen percent; and

23 WHEREAS, individuals listed under "education" by the department as having
24 attained a credential account for less than ten percent of those released between 2007 and
25 2020; and

26 WHEREAS, the recidivism rate of these individuals has steadily improved over time
27 between 2007 and 2012, averaging an eleven percent return to prison in the first year and a
28 reduction to five percent between the years of 2019 and 2020; and

29 WHEREAS, the MacKinac Center for Public Policy performed a comprehensive
30 analysis of correctional education between the years of 1980 and 2022 and documented the

1 impacts of various levels of education, including adult basic education reducing recidivism
2 by six point three percent over three years, and increasing employment by one point four
3 percent; and

4 WHEREAS, a completed secondary education, including a GED, reduces recidivism
5 by seven point one percent and increases employment by one point two percent over three
6 years; and

7 WHEREAS, vocational education reduces recidivism by nine point three percent and
8 increases employment by five point five percent over three years; and

9 WHEREAS, a college education reduces recidivism by twenty-seven point seven
10 percent and increases employment by ten point five percent over three years; and

11 WHEREAS, the RAND Corporation published a study in 2013 that showed every
12 one dollar spent on correctional education saved the public four to five dollars in police,
13 court, and correctional costs, in addition to saving the hardships inflicted through crime; and

14 WHEREAS, educated individuals in jails and prisons create a ripple effect of role
15 models and mentors, which reduces disciplinary infractions and provides a more capable
16 incarcerated workforce; and

17 WHEREAS, on average, half of incarcerated individuals have two school-aged
18 children, who have a higher risk of incarceration due to poverty, trauma, and family
19 disruption; and

20 WHEREAS, parents and children who have studied together, despite physical
21 distance, have reported feelings of mutual inspiration from one another; and

22 WHEREAS, the United States Department of Education has reinstated the Pell Grant
23 program for incarcerated students, increasing the viability of post-secondary education; and

24 WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections created an advisory
25 committee to implement a Pell Grant program; and

26 WHEREAS, incarcerated individuals participate in a wide range of programming that
27 varies between institutions, including support from outside volunteers, temporary
28 arrangements, and distance learning courses; and

29 WHEREAS, the 2022-2023 budget for the Department of Public Safety and
30 Corrections allocates one percent of the budget, five point eighty-six million dollars, for

1 rehabilitation, including forty-three staff education positions out of four thousand four
2 hundred eighty-seven employees, which is an average of five individuals per institution; and

3 WHEREAS, it is unclear how many educational staff exist across the many local jails
4 in Louisiana; and

5 WHEREAS, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative provided a reallocation of funds into
6 rehabilitative programming; and

7 WHEREAS, those funds have been reduced and been the subject of dispute; and

8 WHEREAS, five percent of the incarcerated population are women, who are spread
9 throughout multiple facilities in much less concentration than men with a different range of
10 programming opportunities; and

11 WHEREAS, good time credits are granted upon completion of certain educational
12 programming, so that prison time can be converted into parole time; and

13 WHEREAS, the Voice of the Experienced and Daughters Beyond Incarceration are
14 two organizations with deep connections with Louisiana's incarcerated individuals that are
15 committed to their rehabilitation and restoration of families; and

16 WHEREAS, Tulane University and Loyola University New Orleans both offer
17 bachelor degree programs in Louisiana prisons and Northshore Technical College provides
18 associate degree programs in Louisiana prisons.

19 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
20 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request a commission be convened to study
21 the landscape and efficacy of correctional educational programming in Louisiana jails and
22 prisons.

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

25 (1) One representative from the Department of Public Safety and Corrections with
26 experience in educational programming, designated by the secretary of Department of Public
27 Safety and Corrections.

28 (2) The executive director of the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, or his designee.

1 (3) Two formerly incarcerated individuals who pursued or completed a
2 post-secondary education while incarcerated, designated by the speaker of the House of
3 Representatives after consulting with the stakeholders.

4 (4) Two formerly incarcerated individuals who earned a GED while incarcerated,
5 designated by the speaker of the House of Representatives after consulting with the
6 stakeholders.

7 (5) Two individuals with experience providing education in corrections within the
8 past five years, designated by the speaker of the House of Representatives after consulting
9 with the stakeholders.

10 (6) One member of the Louisiana Board of Regents, designated by the chairman of
11 the Board of Regents.

12 (7) One member of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, designated by the
13 secretary of the Workforce Commission.

14 (8) One representative from the governor's office, designated by the governor.

15 (9) One representative from Daughters Beyond Incarceration, designated by the
16 executive director of the organization.

17 (10) One representative of Voice of the Experienced, designated by the executive
18 director.

19 (11) One representative from Tulane University, designated by the president of
20 Tulane University.

21 (12) One representative from Loyola University New Orleans, designated by the
22 president of Loyola University New Orleans.

23 (13) One representative from the Louisiana Community and Technical Colleges,
24 designated by the system president.

25 (14) One representative from Northshore Technical Community College, designated
26 by the chancellor.

27 (15) One representative from Louisiana State University, designated by the president
28 of Louisiana State University.

29 (16) One representative from Southern University System, designated by the
30 president of Southern University.

1 (17) One representative from the Vera Institute of Justice, designated by the
2 president of the organization.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall provide a comprehensive
4 report to the Louisiana Legislature with all of the following information:

5 (1) Programmatic listings per facility, inclusive of brief descriptions of the number
6 of individuals served, demographic data, length of program, number of individuals on a wait
7 list, and good time earned per program completion.

8 (2) For GED and post-secondary programs that are graded or scored, the average
9 scores and grade point averages of participants, including the transferability of certificates
10 and credits to institutions beyond incarceration.

11 (3) The number and type of vocational and academic credentials, broken down by
12 demographics and institution.

13 (4) Experience, credentials, and turnover rate of program instructors.

14 (5) Assessment of academic and career advice in Louisiana's jails and prisons,
15 provided through outside programs, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, or the
16 sheriffs.

17 (6) Overview of restrictions on program participation due to the type of conviction,
18 length of sentence, place of confinement, gender disparity, or disciplinary infractions.

19 (7) Overview of program attrition by the type of program, reason for
20 non-completion, demographic information, gender, and place of confinement.

21 (8) Post-release educational enrollment.

22 (9) Post-release vocational certification.

23 (10) Post-release employment.

24 (11) Any other indicators of success as determined by the commission.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Tulane University shall provide staff support to
26 the task force.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the representative from Tulane University shall
28 chair the task force and shall call the first meeting no later than November 1, 2023.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each
30 of the task force members and the appointing entities provided in this Resolution.

- 1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one print copy and one electronic copy of any
2 report produced pursuant to this Resolution shall be submitted to the David R. Poynter
3 Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:772 no later than March 1, 2024.
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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)]

HR 174 Reengrossed

2023 Regular Session

Freeman

Creates a task force to study both the academic and vocational educational programs within prisons and jails of this state and to report its findings to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library no later than March 1, 2024.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to the engrossed resolution:

1. Remove the secretary of the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections, one representative from the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections, representatives from the La. Sheriffs' Assoc., family members of currently incarcerated individuals, one member of the La. Board of Regents, one member of the La. Workforce Commission, and the chairmen of the House criminal justice, education, and appropriations committees from the membership of the task force.
2. Provide for Tulane University, rather than the Dept. of Education, to provide staff support to the task force.
3. Provide a deadline for reporting.