

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 133

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request that the commissioners of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Services Financing District be duly appointed by their appointing authorities and thereafter organize themselves, pursuant to R.S. 13:5951, and prepare a juvenile wrap-around services plan and present that plan to the New Orleans City Council, and to urge and request that the Orleans Parish City Council take urgent action on that plan.

WHEREAS, the well-being of the state's children, and particularly those of Orleans Parish, is paramount to the future success of the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the state legislature has created within the parish of Orleans a special district, the Orleans Parish Juvenile Services Financing District, to provide funding for juvenile facilities and services for Orleans Parish; and

WHEREAS, the stated goal of the District is to change the status quo for juvenile services in Orleans Parish by providing the means for a permanent, dedicated funding source for these services; and

WHEREAS, to date, the commissioners have not fully organized themselves pursuant to the mandates in R.S. 13:5951, to carry out their responsibilities to create the contemplated juvenile services plan; and

WHEREAS, the New Orleans City Council is mandated, upon written request of the District to call an election on the question of financing the juvenile services plan; and

WHEREAS, children who enter the juvenile justice system should receive appropriate services to treat underlying problems causing their delinquency; and

WHEREAS, children who receive treatment pre-adjudication are less likely to re-offend and are better equipped to grow and become successful members of their community; and

WHEREAS, the City of New Orleans has many programs, but most of them are post-adjudication and court-sponsored; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Jefferson Parish approved a ten-year property tax at 3.5 mills which expires in 2030 and funds ninety percent of the juvenile justice programs in Jefferson Parish; and

WHEREAS, the City of New Orleans funds its juvenile justice program through federal grants, and state and city appropriations, which creates potential fluctuations in available funding and services for juveniles.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request that the board of commissioners of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Services Financing District be duly appointed by their appointing authorities and thereafter organize themselves and create a comprehensive juvenile services plan, specifying the facilities, programs, and operations of the Orleans Parish Juvenile Courts, family and juvenile counseling, and other wrap-around services proposed, and the alternative, independent, permanent funding requirements to support the plan, as deemed advisable and in the public interest.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana urges and requests that the New Orleans City Council implement its responsibilities pursuant to R.S. 13:5951, which may include placing the plan for funding on the ballot for voter decision at the earliest possible election opportunity.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE