

2024 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY SENATOR DUPLESSIS

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT. Creates the Louisiana Opportunity Youth Task Force.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To create and provide for the Louisiana Opportunity Youth Task Force.

3 WHEREAS, according to the latest United States Census, almost one in five  
4 Louisianians live in poverty and one in four children in the state grow up in poverty, and  
5 sizeable inequality and disparities remain, especially for Louisiana's disconnected youth; and

6 WHEREAS, an "opportunity youth" is defined as a person between the ages of  
7 sixteen and twenty-four years who is not enrolled in school, does not work, or is a teen or  
8 young adult involved with the foster care, juvenile justice, or homeless systems; and

9 WHEREAS, opportunity youth facing socioeconomic and systemic barriers are  
10 oftentimes disconnected from education and workforce training opportunities, preventing  
11 young people of color, especially, from accessing Louisiana's prosperity; and

12 WHEREAS, the cost of failing young people at this critical juncture in their lives has  
13 significant long-term costs to them as individuals and to society at large; and

14 WHEREAS, the White House Council for Community Solutions commissioned a  
15 study entitled, "The Economic Value of Opportunity Youth", estimating that in the year 2011  
16 alone taxpayers "shouldered more than \$93 billion to compensate for lost taxes and direct  
17 costs to support young people disengaged from both education and work," while the  
18 long-term societal costs were projected to be \$4.7 trillion over their lifetimes; and

1           WHEREAS, data collected from the 2021 American Community Survey (ACS) of  
2 the U.S. Census shows that there were 4.7 million disconnected youth nationwide, or about  
3 one in eight young people; and

4           WHEREAS, Louisiana has the second-highest youth disconnection rate in the  
5 country, with 17.7 percent (96,000) of youth sixteen to twenty-four years of age neither in  
6 school nor at work, compared to 12.1 percent nationally; and

7           WHEREAS, the latest ACS data indicates that nationally in 2021, fifteen percent  
8 (307,954) of youth sixteen to nineteen years of age were not in school in the previous three  
9 months and 38.4 percent of young adults twenty to twenty-four years of age were  
10 unemployed (8.9 percent or 225,942); and

11           WHEREAS, research shows that more than twenty-five percent, or about 745,214,  
12 of Louisiana's youth is not a part of the labor force at all; and

13           WHEREAS, in Louisiana in 2020, opportunity youth were 1.7 times more likely to  
14 live below the poverty line as connected youth, disconnected women were three times more  
15 likely to be mothers as their connected peers, and over ten percent of disconnected youth and  
16 twenty-five percent of disconnected young Black men are living in an institution; and

17           WHEREAS, a greater proportion of Louisiana's opportunity youth were living in  
18 poverty relative to their connected peers (37.1 percent and 22.9 percent, respectively) and  
19 over one-half of the state's opportunity youth (19 to 24 years of age) has no education  
20 beyond a high school diploma, relative to their connected peers (50.7 percent and 28.5  
21 percent, respectively); and

22           WHEREAS, opportunity youth face unique employment, education, and training  
23 barriers that often do not align with efforts that center adults; and

24           WHEREAS, in Louisiana, 2021 ACS data indicates the rate of disconnection among  
25 Black youth (27.9%) was more than twice that of white youth (11.3%); and

26           WHEREAS, Black and Latino adolescents are not only disproportionately more  
27 likely to come from low-income households and have experienced past trauma, but are faced  
28 with discrimination that can derail their physical and mental well-being; and

29           WHEREAS, despite declines in youth incarceration, significant gaps remain as youth  
30 of color are over-represented in our criminal justice system; and

1           WHEREAS, prioritizing opportunity youth will not only expand their education and  
2 workforce opportunities, but also expand the pool of talent that employers can access to meet  
3 their workforce needs, while averting the societal costs associated with disconnection.

4           THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana  
5 does hereby establish and provide for the Task Force on Louisiana's Opportunity Youth to  
6 study ways of improving the lives of this population, and to propose recommendations,  
7 together with specific proposals for legislation, if the task force deems it necessary and  
8 appropriate.

9           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force should include consideration of  
10 the following:

11           (1) Funding for education and workforce training programs that center opportunity  
12 youth and create pathways to good jobs.

13           (2) Expansion of innovative "earn and learn" opportunities, including  
14 apprenticeships, pre-apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities.

15           (3) Advancement of dual enrollment implementation, which allows opportunity  
16 youth to earn college credit while earning their high school equivalency.

17           (4) Ensure that opportunity youth will be included in research conducted by the  
18 Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center.

19           (5) The protection and strengthening of social safety net investments for opportunity  
20 youth that support basic needs such as food, housing, internet access, transportation,  
21 childcare, health, and mental health care, enabling them to complete their education and  
22 training goals, including removing barriers to accessing student financial aid programs.

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

25           (1) The secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC), or her  
26 designee, and one additional staff member having knowledge of workforce  
27 programming.

28           (2) The superintendent of the Louisiana Department of Education, or his  
29 designee.

30           (3) The president of Louisiana's Community and Technical Colleges (LCTCS),

1                   or his designee.

2           (4)    Two members of the Louisiana Opportunity Youth Coalition.

3           (5)    The executive director of the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy  
4                   Center, or his designee.

5           (6)    The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH), or his designee.

6           (7)    The secretary of the Department of Children and Families (DCFS), or his  
7                   designee.

8           (8)    Lived experts of Louisiana's opportunity youth population current or past.

9           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the  
10           names of designees to the task force to the Louisiana Workforce Commission no later than  
11           August 15, 2024.

12           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana Workforce Commission shall  
13           provide staff support as needed by the task force.

14           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no later than September 15, 2024, the secretary  
15           of the Louisiana Workforce Commission shall convene the first meeting of the task force,  
16           at which the members may elect a chairman, vice chairman, and other officers as the task  
17           force deems appropriate.

18           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting this study, the task force may seek  
19           input and advice from any interested stakeholder, including: individuals who have personal  
20           experience with the target population; direct service providers; opportunity youth current and  
21           past.

22           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the task force shall constitute a  
23           quorum for the transition of business, and all official actions of the task force shall require  
24           the affirmative vote of a majority of members.

25           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the members of the task force shall serve  
26           without compensation, except per diem or expenses reimbursement to which they may be  
27           individually entitled as members of their constituent organizations.

28           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Task Force on Louisiana Opportunity Youth  
29           may submit its findings and recommendations, if any, in the form of a written report to the  
30           secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the Senate and House committees on

1 Labor and Industrial Relations, the Senate and House committees on Education, and the  
2 David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, no later  
3 than February 1, 2025.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
5 secretary of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, the secretary of the Louisiana  
6 Department of Health, the secretary of the Department of Children and Families, the  
7 superintendent of the Louisiana Department of Education, the president of Louisiana's  
8 Community and Technical Colleges, the executive director of the Kathleen Babineaux  
9 Blanco Public Policy Center, and the Louisiana Opportunity Youth Coalition.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Yoursheka D. Butler.

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	DIGEST	
SR 47 Original	2024 Regular Session	Duplessis

Creates the Louisiana Opportunity Youth Task Force to study ways to expand the education and workforce opportunities for opportunity youth, and to propose recommendations, together with specific proposals for legislation, if the task force deems it necessary or appropriate.

Provides that the task force consist of the following members:

- (1) The secretary of the La. Workforce Commission (LWC), or her designee, and one additional staff member having knowledge of workforce programming.
- (2) The superintendent of the La. Dept. of Education, or his designee.
- (3) The president of La.'s Community and Technical Colleges (LCTCS), or his designee.
- (4) Two members of the La. Opportunity Youth Coalition.
- (5) The executive director of Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center, or his designee.
- (6) The secretary of the La. Dept. of Health (LDH), or his designee.
- (7) The secretary of the Dept. of Children and Families (DCFS), or his designee.
- (8) Lived experts of Louisiana's opportunity youth population current or past.

Provides relative to meetings of the task force, quorum, voting, and staffing.

Provides that the task force may make a written report of its findings and recommendations by February 1, 2025.