

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 136

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To create and provide for the Task Force on Education Participation of Student Mothers.

WHEREAS, student mothers are individuals who have dependent children and who attend postsecondary educational institutions; and

WHEREAS, student mothers often face challenges, including lack of affordable childcare and balancing work responsibilities with the demands of postsecondary education; and

WHEREAS, work interruptions caused by childcare have disproportionately impacted women, forcing them to reduce work hours, take leaves of absence, or permanently leave the workforce or abandon postsecondary educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, a 2020 report by the Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice revealed that student mothers are more likely to experience food and housing insecurities while relying on public assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis found that by earning a degree or credential, a low-income student mother boosts their income and the earning potential of their children when those children become adults.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby establish and provide for the Task Force on Education Participation of Student Mothers to study ways to increase educational participation and opportunities designed to support mothers in joining, rejoining, or advancing in the workforce, and to propose recommendations, together with specific proposals for legislation, by written report to the Senate of the Louisiana Legislature and to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, no later than March 1, 2025.

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

(1) The president of the Senate or his designee, who shall serve as the chairman of the task force.

(2) The chairman of the Senate Committee on Education or his designee.

(3) The chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Women and Children or his designee.

(4) The commissioner of higher education or his designee.

(5) The commissioner of the Louisiana Workforce Commission or his designee.

(6) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services or his designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that as part of its duties the task force shall identify:

(1) Percentage of student parents comprising postsecondary student populations;

(2) Percentage of student parents who are women;

(3) Percentage of student mothers who are single parents;

(4) Percentage of student mothers who both work and are enrolled at an institution of higher education and average hours worked per week;

(5) Current federal, state, and regional resources/efforts available to support student mothers enrolled in postsecondary institutions, including campus, agency and community resources or programming; and

(6) Resource and programming gaps to address and achieve the goals.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be staffed by the Senate Committee on Education.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the names of designees to the task force to the secretary of the Senate no later than August 1, 2024.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that no later than September 15, 2024, the chairman of the task force shall convene the first meeting. At the first meeting, the members may elect a vice chairman and other officers as the task force may deem appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the task force shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business. All official actions of the task force shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of the members.

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

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate on the date of the submission of its report or March 1, 2025, whichever occurs first.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the commissioner of higher education, the commissioner of the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the secretary of the Louisiana Department of Children and Family Services.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE