

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 146

BY SENATOR BARROW

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the office of juvenile justice to submit a report to the legislature on complaints, investigations, and litigation related to certain facilities housing juveniles.

WHEREAS, while the juvenile is in state custody, the state has a parental responsibility to the minor child, including providing for educational and mental health needs in order to rehabilitate the child for success upon release; and

WHEREAS, over the past few years, there have been several high profile cases involving the office of juvenile justice, including the decision to house juveniles at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola and lawsuits regarding the conditions at the Ware Youth Center; and

WHEREAS, litigation filed in response to housing juveniles at Angola included claims that office of juvenile justice officials deprived youth of adequate education, exercise and mental health services, restricted access to family, and failed to provide safe drinking water and air conditioning in the juvenile's cells; and

WHEREAS, the Ware Youth Center only underwent any formal investigations after the New York Times published an investigative article uncovering allegations of sexual abuse, violence, and psychological torture by staff members; and

WHEREAS, it is imperative for the safety and well-being of the juveniles under the supervision and care of the state that complaints, investigations, and litigation against the office of juvenile justice is brought to the attention of legislators before it is publicized by news outlets.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the office of juvenile justice to compile and submit a report to the legislature containing the following:

(1) All complaints filed against any state-run or contracted secure or non-secure care facility housing juveniles or a juvenile detention facility over the past four years.

(2) The status and outcome of any investigations conducted in response to the complaints.

(3) The status of any litigation filed against any state-run or contracted secure care or non-secure care facility housing juveniles or a juvenile detention facility over the past four years.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the office of juvenile justice shall consult with the Department of Children and Family Services and any municipalities, parishes, and juvenile justice districts as necessary to compile the report.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the initial report shall be submitted to the legislature no later than February 1, 2025, and an updated annual report shall be submitted to the legislature no later than February first of each year.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that upon receipt of the report, the Senate Committee on Judiciary B may hold a public hearing to review the report and exercise oversight of the office of juvenile justice.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the deputy secretary of the office of juvenile justice.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE