

2024 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 167

BY SENATOR BARROW

CHILDREN. Establishes a task force to study the processes for investigating child sexual abuse in Louisiana.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To create and provide for the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Investigation Processes.

3 WHEREAS, Dr. David Finkelhor, Director of the Crimes against Children Research  
4 Center at the University of New Hampshire, has stated, "The impact of child sexual abuse  
5 is profound and long-lasting, affecting not only the victims but also their families and  
6 communities. Early and effective intervention is crucial to mitigate these effects and to bring  
7 justice to the victims"; and

8 WHEREAS, national statistics indicate that approximately one in ten children will  
9 be sexually abused before their eighteenth birthday, with an estimated sixty percent of  
10 victims never disclosing their abuse, and only twelve percent of child sexual abuse cases  
11 being reported to authorities; and

12 WHEREAS, the National Children's Alliance's 2023 annual report states that, in  
13 Louisiana, child advocacy centers served a total of 6,144 children with 4,105 reports of child  
14 sexual abuse; and

15 WHEREAS, in calendar year 2023, the Department of Children and Family Services  
16 reported 1,999 investigations involving at least one allegation of sexual abuse or juvenile sex  
17 trafficking affecting 2,340 individual alleged child victims; and

18 WHEREAS, the establishment of a Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Investigation

1 Processes is essential to thoroughly examine the current processes for investigating child  
2 sexual abuse, identify gaps and weaknesses, and recommend actionable improvements to  
3 better protect and support victims.

4 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana  
5 does hereby establish and provide for the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Investigation  
6 Processes to study the methods, systems, investigative techniques, and management of  
7 investigations involving sexual abuse of children, and to propose recommendations, together  
8 with specific proposals for legislation, if any, by written report to the Senate and to the  
9 David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, no later  
10 than February 28, 2025.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the purposes of the Task Force on Child Sexual  
12 Abuse Investigation Processes shall include but not be limited to the following:

13 (1) Investigating current procedures and protocols used by law enforcement, child  
14 protective service agencies, or other relevant agencies in the investigation of child sexual  
15 abuse cases.

16 (2) Evaluating the effectiveness of investigative practices used in Louisiana and  
17 identifying any deficiencies or areas needing improvement.

18 (3) Recommending legislative and procedural changes to enhance the effectiveness,  
19 efficiency, and sensitivity of investigations.

20 (4) Promoting interagency collaboration and communication to produce a  
21 comprehensive approach to investigating child sex abuse.

22 (5) Encouraging timely, compassionate, and effective support services including  
23 medical, psychological, and legal assistance.

24 (6) Identifying and developing specialized training programs for professionals who  
25 investigate or provide support in sexual abuse cases involving children including law  
26 enforcement officers, social workers, medical personnel, prosecutors, and educators.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force should consider of accepting  
28 public testimony for the purpose of achieving its goals.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall consist of members from  
30 each of the following, to be appointed by the specified entity:

1 (1) Two representatives from the Department of Children and Family Services,  
2 appointed by the secretary.

3 (2) A law enforcement officer with experience investigating sexual abuse in children,  
4 appointed by the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association.

5 (3) A juvenile court judge appointed by the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and  
6 Family Court Judges.

7 (4) A family court judge appointed by the Louisiana District Judges Association.

8 (5) A district attorney appointed by the Louisiana District Attorneys Association.

9 (6) A forensic interviewer appointed by the Louisiana Alliance of Children's  
10 Advocacy Centers.

11 (7) A child psychologist appointed by the chairman of the Louisiana State Board of  
12 Examiners of Psychologists.

13 (8) A survivor of child sexual abuse appointed by Sexual Trauma Awareness &  
14 Response.

15 (9) A custodial parent or caretaker of a child who has been the subject of a child  
16 sexual abuse investigation, appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and  
17 Family Services.

18 (10) A noncustodial parent of a child who has been the subject of a child sexual  
19 abuse investigation appointed by Fathers On a Mission (FOAM).

20 (11) A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner, appointed by the president of the Louisiana  
21 State Board of Nursing.

22 (12) The president of the Louisiana Senate, or his designee.

23 (13) The state child ombudsman, or her designee.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that each designating authority shall submit the  
25 names of designees to the task force to the president of the Louisiana Senate no later than  
26 August 15, 2024.

27 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED the task force shall convene for its first meeting no  
28 later than October 1, 2024, at the call of the president of the Louisiana Senate or his  
29 designee, and at the first meeting, the members shall elect a chairman and other officers as  
30 the task force may deem appropriate.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a majority of the task force shall constitute a  
2 quorum for the transaction of business, and all official actions of the task force shall require  
3 the affirmative vote of a majority of the quorum.

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

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall receive staff support from  
8 one or more of the entities from which the task force's membership is designated or  
9 appointed, at the discretion of the task force.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall terminate on the date of the  
11 submission of its report, if any, or February 28, 2025, whichever occurs first.

12 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the  
13 president of the Louisiana Senate, the Department of Children and Family Services, the  
14 Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges,  
15 the Louisiana District Judges Association, the Louisiana District Attorneys Association, the  
16 Louisiana Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers, the Louisiana State Board of Examiners  
17 of Psychologists, Sexual Trauma Awareness & Response, Fathers On a Mission, the  
18 Louisiana State Board of Nursing, and the state child ombudsman.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jonathon Wagner.

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#### DIGEST

SR 167 Original

2024 Regular Session

Barrow

Establishes the Task Force on Child Sexual Abuse Investigation Processes to examine the current processes for investigating child sexual abuse, identify gaps and weaknesses, recommend actionable improvements to better protect and support victims, and to report to the legislature and the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library, not later than February 28, 2025, and to terminate upon the date of submission of such report or February 28, 2025, whichever occurs first.

Provide that the task force will be comprised of the following members:

- (1) Two representatives from the Dept. of Children and Family Services, appointed by the secretary.
- (2) A law enforcement officer with experience investigating sexual abuse in children appointed by the La. Sheriffs' Association.
- (3) A juvenile court judge appointed by the La. Council of Juvenile and Family Court

- Judges.
- (4) A family court judge appointed by the La. District Judges Association.
  - (5) A district attorney appointed by the La. District Attorneys Association.
  - (6) A forensic interviewer appointed by the La. Alliance of Children's Advocacy Centers.
  - (7) A child psychologists appointed by the chairman of the La. State Board of Examiners of Psychologists.
  - (8) A survivor of child sexual abuse appointed by Sexual Trauma Awareness & Response.
  - (9) A custodial parent or caretaker of a child who has been the subject of a child sexual abuse investigation, appointed by the secretary of the Dept. of Children and Family Services.
  - (10) A noncustodial parent of a child who has been the subject of a sexual abuse investigation, appointed by Fathers On a Mission.
  - (11) A Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner appointed by the president of the La. State Board of Nursing.
  - (12) The president of the La. Senate, or his designee.
  - (13) The state child ombudsman, or her designee.

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

Provides that the task force may make a written report of its findings and recommendations by February 28, 2025.