

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 121

BY SENATOR MORRELL

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the legislative auditor to review certain crime data and statistics for the city of New Orleans.

WHEREAS, the city of New Orleans has a shockingly low ratio of gun assaults per murder compared to national averages; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 the city's gun assaults per murder ratio was among the lowest in the country and it was even lower in 2012; and

WHEREAS, in 2010 in the city of New Orleans there were approximately seven gun assaults per murder and in 2012 there were approximately four gun assaults per murder; and

WHEREAS, according to an analysis of federal crime data by NOLA.com/The Times-Picayune, New Orleans has consistently ranked first or second in murder rate among cities with a population of one hundred thousand or more during the past decade, but it consistently ranks at or near the bottom of the fifty most murderous cities in the country in the ratio of gun assaults to murder; and

WHEREAS, the violent crime rate for the city of New Orleans is roughly one-half the average of the twenty most murderous cities in America and twice as high than the average for all large cities; and

WHEREAS, aggravated assaults and robberies are far more common than rapes and murders, and thus far more important in determining a city's violent crime rate; and

WHEREAS, criminologists have determined that murder is the most reliable statistic and that violent crime usually moves in tandem with murder, but New Orleans has a lower rate of violent crime than any other city with a murder epidemic; and

WHEREAS, Rick Rosenfeld, a criminologist at the University of Missouri-St. Louis who specializes in crime statistics, noted that the ratio of aggravated assaults to murders has been falling precipitously in New Orleans since the mid-1990's, much faster than the rate of killings; and

WHEREAS, aggravated assaults are essentially unsuccessful murders, and there is no evidence that emergency medical care in New Orleans has been on a steady decline; and

WHEREAS, aggravated assaults with guns reported by the New Orleans Police Department have fallen sixty-four percent since 1997; and

WHEREAS, since 1997 the number of shooting victims treated at Charity Hospital or the Interim LSU Hospital, the area's only Level 1 trauma center, have fallen by sixteen percent; and

WHEREAS, because gun assaults and murders tend to stem from the same violent impulses, criminologists expect to see a relationship between the two numbers, but New Orleans gun assault per murder ratio has decreased significantly during the past twenty years which is causing national speculation that the New Orleans Police Department may be under reporting or misclassifying certain crimes; and

WHEREAS, millions of dollars in public funds have been expended on the crime reporting system in the city of New Orleans.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the legislative auditor to review certain crime data and statistics for the city of New Orleans and make a report of his findings to the Senate Committee on Judiciary B by August 1, 2013.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the legislative auditor.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE