

1 SJR78
2 175576-4
3 By Senators Figures, Albritton, Allen, Beasley, Blackwell,
4 Brewbaker, Bussman, Chambliss, Coleman-Madison, Dial, Dunn,
5 Glover, Hightower, Holley, Holtzclaw, Livingston, Marsh,
6 McClendon, Melson, Orr, Pittman, Reed, Ross, Sanders, Sanford,
7 Scofield, Shelnut, Singleton, Smith, Smitherman, Stutts,
8 Waggoner, Ward, Whatley and Williams
9 RFD:
10 First Read: 05-APR-16

1 SJR78

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4 ENROLLED, SJR78,

5 CREATING THE ALABAMA TASK FORCE ON AT-RISK CHILDREN.
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7 WHEREAS, the multiple problems of children engaged
8 in truant, delinquent, and at-risk behavior require the
9 attention and services of educators, service providers, and
10 citizens of the state; and

11 WHEREAS, a substantial number of children in the
12 community and in the juvenile and criminal justice systems
13 suffer from a mental illness and do not have access to
14 adequate community-based mental health services; and

15 WHEREAS, a substantial number of children in the
16 community and in the juvenile justice system are also in the
17 custody of the Department of Human Resources; and

18 WHEREAS, agencies and community-based organizations
19 that have jurisdiction over, or provide services to, children
20 who are engaged in truant, delinquent, and at-risk behavior
21 are in the best position to ensure educational and career
22 success for these children; and

23 WHEREAS, while the Juvenile Justice Act of 2008
24 provided great strides towards reducing the number of children
25 incarcerated for minor infractions and provided reforms that

1 more efficiently use the resources of the juvenile justice
2 system, there are remaining issues that children who engage in
3 truant, at-risk, and delinquent behavior face that affect this
4 population's opportunity for future success; and

5 WHEREAS, children and adolescents are in the process
6 of psychological development and, as a result, may engage in
7 negative behavior that requires correction with appropriate
8 services; and

9 WHEREAS, children have a unique propensity for
10 change with appropriate rehabilitative treatment and education
11 services; and

12 WHEREAS, harsh and overly punitive school discipline
13 practices can increase the probability that children enter the
14 juvenile and criminal justice systems; and

15 WHEREAS, whenever possible and considering the best
16 interest of the child and the community, children in the
17 juvenile and criminal justice systems should receive
18 community-based services; and

19 WHEREAS, the majority of children who engage in
20 serious negative behaviors are best served by community-based
21 programs or the juvenile justice system, rather than the adult
22 system; and

23 WHEREAS, children in the juvenile and criminal
24 justice systems require appropriate services, including
25 education and rehabilitation; and

1 WHEREAS, children and adolescents housed in
2 residential and secure facilities are entitled to education
3 and rehabilitative services and safe housing conditions; and

4 WHEREAS, children who are housed in adult facilities
5 are at increased risk for physical and sexual assault and are
6 more likely to commit suicide compared to juveniles housed in
7 juvenile facilities and children generally; and

8 WHEREAS, children exiting the juvenile and criminal
9 justice systems require specialized services to ensure that
10 their reentry into the community promotes positive outcomes;
11 and

12 WHEREAS, a detailed study of systems that can impact
13 children will provide complete information to guide the
14 development and implementation of programs beneficial to
15 children; now therefore,

16 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
17 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That there is created the Alabama
18 Task Force on At-Risk Children to be comprised of the
19 following members:

20 (1) The Executive Director of the Department of
21 Youth Services, or his or her designee, and one representative
22 appointed by the director.

23 (2) One representative of the Department of Human
24 Resources appointed by the commissioner of the department.

1 (3) One representative of the Department of Mental
2 Health appointed by the commissioner of the department.

3 (4) Two family court judges, one representing a
4 rural county and one representing an urban county appointed by
5 the Association of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

6 (5) One board certified mental health professional
7 with experience in providing services to children and
8 adolescents.

9 (6) One juvenile probation officer appointed by the
10 Administrative Office of Courts.

11 (7) One attorney licensed to practice in Alabama
12 with extensive experience in representing children in
13 delinquency proceedings appointed by the Office of Indigent
14 Defense Services.

15 (8) Two attorneys licensed to practice in Alabama
16 with extensive experience in policy and litigation on juvenile
17 justice and children's issues, with one appointed by the Board
18 of the Children's First Foundation and one appointed by the
19 Alabama Bar Association.

20 (9) One representative appointed by the Association
21 of the County Commissions of Alabama.

22 (10) One current or former school superintendent
23 appointed by the Alabama School Superintendents' Association.

1 (11) One representative of the Department of
2 Education appointed by the Superintendent of the Department of
3 Education.

4 (12) One representative of the Senate appointed by
5 the Senate President Pro Tempore.

6 (13) One representative of the House of
7 Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of
8 Representatives.

9 (14) The Commissioner of the Department of
10 Corrections or his or her designee.

11 (15) One member appointed by the Sheriffs'
12 Association.

13 (16) One representative of the Governor's office
14 appointed by the Governor.

15 (17) One representative of the House of
16 Representatives appointed by the Chair of the House Judiciary
17 Committee.

18 (18) One representative of the Senate appointed by
19 the Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

20 The Governor shall appoint the chair once all
21 appointments have been made to the task force.

22 All appointing authorities shall coordinate their
23 appointments so that diversity of gender, race, and
24 geographical areas are reflective of the makeup of the state,

1 as well as the diversity and demographics of the Alabama
2 prison population.

3 In collaboration with Alabama universities and
4 colleges, the task force shall seek to identify potential
5 legislative or administrative solutions to serve children
6 involved in the juvenile and criminal justice systems, and
7 strategies to reduce the number of children who become
8 involved in these systems.

9 In collaboration with Alabama universities and
10 colleges, the task force shall study a broad range of issues
11 related to children in the juvenile and criminal justice
12 systems, including, but not limited to, the appropriate
13 rehabilitative and education services for children involved in
14 the juvenile and criminal systems, aftercare services and
15 procedures for children reentering the community, community
16 and preventive mental health services to prevent children from
17 entering the juvenile and criminal justice systems, mental
18 health treatment for children with disabilities involved in
19 the juvenile and criminal justice systems, procedures for
20 addressing the needs of children in the custody of the
21 Department of Human Resources who are involved in the juvenile
22 and criminal justice systems, and preventive strategies to
23 reduce the number of children involved in the juvenile and
24 criminal justice systems. The task force shall report its
25 findings, conclusions, and recommendations for proposed

1 legislation to the Legislature no later than the fifteenth day
2 of the 2017 Regular Session.

3 Each nonlegislative member of the task force may be
4 reimbursed for expenses related to attending meetings
5 consistent with policies of the various appointing
6 authorities.

7 Upon the request of the chair, the Secretary of the
8 Senate and the Clerk of the House of Representatives shall
9 provide necessary clerical assistance for the work of the task
10 force. Each legislative member of the task force shall be
11 entitled to his or her regular legislative compensation, per
12 diem, and travel expenses for each day he or she attends a
13 meeting of the task force in accordance with Amendment 871 of
14 the Constitution of Alabama of 1901. These payments shall be
15 paid out of any funds appropriated to the use of the
16 Legislature.

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President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

Speaker of the House of Representatives

SJR78
Senate 05-APR-16
I hereby certify that the within Senate Joint Resolution
originated in and was adopted by the Senate.

Patrick Harris
Secretary

House of Representatives
Adopted: 13-APR-16

By: Senator Figures