

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 482

BY REPRESENTATIVES JEFFERSON, AMEDEE, BACALA, BAGNERIS, BARRAS, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, BISHOP, BOUIE, BROADWATER, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, CARPENTER, ROBBY CARTER, STEVE CARTER, CHANEY, CONNICK, COX, CROMER, DAVIS, DEVILLIER, EDMONDS, FALCONER, GAINES, GAROFALO, GISCLAIR, JIMMY HARRIS, LANCE HARRIS, HAZEL, HILFERTY, HOFFMANN, HORTON, HOWARD, HUNTER, JACKSON, JENKINS, MIKE JOHNSON, ROBERT JOHNSON, NANCY LANDRY, LEBAS, LOPINTO, LYONS, MAGEE, MARCELLE, MIGUEZ, JIM MORRIS, NORTON, PEARSON, POPE, PRICE, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, SCHEXNAYDER, SCHRODER, SEABAUGH, SMITH, STOKES, WHITE, WILLMOTT, AND ZERINGUE AND SENATORS BISHOP, BOUDREAUX, BROWN, ERDEY, LUNEAU, MILLS, AND WALSWORTH

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 35-A of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be  
3 comprised of R.S. 46:2431 through 2434, relative to foster care; to create and  
4 provide for the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force; to provide for the  
5 composition, functions, and duties of the task force; to provide for termination of the  
6 task force; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. Chapter 35-A of Title 46 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,  
9 comprised of R.S. 46:2431 through 2434, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 CHAPTER 35-A. FOSTER CARE AND PERMANENCE TASK FORCE

11 §2431. Declaration; purpose

12 A. The legislature hereby declares that the interests of the most vulnerable  
13 children of this state are best served through policies designed to create lasting  
14 connections for children who spend time in the state's foster care system.

15 B. The purpose of this Chapter is to create and provide for a task force to  
16 study and make recommendations concerning best practices for achieving  
17 permanency for foster children.

1           §2432. Task Force; creation; composition; meetings

2           A. There is hereby created the Foster Care and Permanence Task Force,  
3           referred to hereafter as the "task force", which shall be composed of the following  
4           members:

5           (1) Two members representing the Department of Children and Family  
6           Services appointed by the secretary of the department, one of whom shall be a  
7           representative of the foster care program of the office of children and family  
8           services.

9           (2) The dean of the Southern University Nelson Mandela School of Public  
10          Policy or his designee.

11          (3) The director of the Louisiana State University School of Social Work or  
12          his designee.

13          (4) The executive director of the National Association of Social Workers,  
14          Louisiana Chapter, or his designee.

15          (5) The president of LouisianaChildren.org or his designee.

16          (6) The executive director of the Louisiana Foster and Adoptive Parent  
17          Association or his designee.

18          (7) A person who has served as a relative caretaker for a child in foster care  
19          appointed by the secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services.

20          B. The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services shall  
21          take such actions as are necessary to ensure that the initial convening of the task  
22          force occurs no later than October 1, 2016.

23          C. The task force members shall select a chairman annually, and he shall  
24          serve as chairman without salary.

25          D. Task force members shall serve without compensation, except per diem  
26          or expense reimbursement to which they may be individually entitled by their  
27          respective employer organizations.

28          E. The task force shall hold at least two public meetings each year at a place  
29          designated by the chairman.

1           §2433. Functions and duties of the task force

2                   A. The functions of the task force shall include all of the following:

3                           (1) Examination of means and best practices to ensure that foster children  
 4                           and adoptive children are placed in homes that can become permanent placements  
 5                           when reunification is not possible, thereby reducing the number of children who are  
 6                           moved repeatedly among different homes.

7                           (2) Identification of means by which to assess persons applying to be foster  
 8                           parents, adoptive parents, and relative caretakers.

9                           (3) Examination of means and best practices to encourage recruitment and  
 10                           retention of foster parents and relative caretakers.

11                           (4) Examination of means to facilitate provision to foster parents and  
 12                           adoptive parents of all available information about a foster child's behavior before  
 13                           the child is placed with the foster or adoptive parents.

14                           (5) Recommendation of means by which to ensure that adoption subsidies  
 15                           remain sufficient to meet the needs of an adoptive child and his adoptive parents as  
 16                           the child grows older.

17                           (6) Recommendation of means by which to improve the rate of permanency  
 18                           among young people who are fourteen years of age or older and are in the state foster  
 19                           care system or in residential placement.

20                           (7) Recommendations for a process to mediate conflicts between foster or  
 21                           adoptive parents and child placement agencies or biological parents.

22                           (8) Identification of laws and agency policies that unduly serve as barriers  
 23                           to permanency.

24                           (9) Identification of barriers with respect to recruitment of a competent  
 25                           workforce and substitute caretaker network.

26                           (10) Examination of barriers with respect to placement resources.

27                           B. On or before December 31, 2017, and semiannually thereafter, the task  
 28                           force shall prepare and submit to the governor and the legislature a report on the  
 29                           status and well-being of children in foster care, with a particular focus on any  
 30                           policies and practices which are facilitating or could likely facilitate a greater degree

1           of permanency for foster children. The report shall include any findings and  
2           recommendations derived from the functions specified in Subsection A of this  
3           Section.

4           §2434. Termination

5           The provisions of this Chapter shall terminate on January 1, 2018, and  
6           thereafter shall be null, void, and without effect.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF LOUISIANA

APPROVED: \_\_\_\_\_