HLS 11RS-304 **ORIGINAL**

Regular Session, 2011

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 16

BY REPRESENTATIVE KATZ

DRUGS/ILLEGAL: Authorizes and directs the Drug Policy Board to coordinate a study of the overall impact and estimated aggregate costs of illegal drug use in the state of La.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2	To authorize and direct the Drug Policy Board to coordinate a study of the overall impact
3	and estimated aggregate costs of illegal drug use in the state of Louisiana.
4	WHEREAS, drug abuse in Louisiana has a devastating effect on families and
5	communities, and the human toll of drug abuse in our beloved state is tragic; and
6	WHEREAS, the economic costs associated with illegal drug use are considerable,
7	including not only direct costs borne by the public in areas such as law enforcement,
8	criminal justice, and public health, but also the opportunity cost of education and
9	employment opportunities foregone by those who use illegal drugs; and
10	WHEREAS, in terms of effects on physical health, as reported by the United States
11	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, illegal drugs are far more harmful than alcohol,
12	with the number of alcohol-induced deaths and drug-induced deaths roughly equivalent
13	despite users of alcohol outnumbering users of drugs by a seven-to-one margin; and
14	WHEREAS, the Office of National Drug Control Policy indicates that known health
15	care costs of drug abuse in the most recent period studied were over fifteen billion dollars
16	annually; and
17	WHEREAS, chronic mental illness is inextricably linked with abuse of illegal drugs
18	and is extremely costly to treat, as shown in a 1996 study conducted by Harvard Medical
19	School researchers which concluded that psychiatric treatment costs for substance abusers
20	are nearly sixty percent higher than the same treatment for nonabusers; and

1	WHEREAS, as documented in the most recent Louisiana Drug Threat Assessment
2	conducted by the United States Department of Justice's National Drug Intelligence Center,
3	over thirty percent of Louisiana prisoners are incarcerated for drug-related crimes, second
4	only to those imprisoned for violent crimes (thirty-eight percent), with the latter crimes often
5	having a root cause in drug abuse or distribution; and
6	WHEREAS, in the same Louisiana Drug Threat Assessment, a major Louisiana city
7	estimated that as many as three quarters of all homicides in the city are drug related; and
8	WHEREAS, evidence shows that illegal drug use among students and parents has
9	a highly detrimental impact on educational prospects of young people, with illegal drug use
10	by students or their families as a major factor contributing to the incidence of school
11	dropouts; and
12	WHEREAS, according to a 2007 report by the United States Substance Abuse and
13	Mental Health Services Administration, nineteen percent of workers under age twenty-six
14	and more than ten percent of workers age twenty-six to thirty-four used illicit drugs during
15	the past month, illustrating a component in the overall cost of drug use to United States
16	businesses, which is estimated to be one hundred billion dollars annually; and
17	WHEREAS, persons who remain unemployed due to their inability to pass a pre-
18	employment drug screening cause a significant net loss to the economy of this state and
19	create an entirely avoidable cost to society; and
20	WHEREAS, the points above are but few examples of the devastating impact of
21	illegal drug use; and
22	WHEREAS, undertaking a study of the total detriment to Louisiana of illegal drug
23	use would be a challenging endeavor, yet such a study is essential if the public is to
24	understand the true magnitude of this problem in our state; and
25	WHEREAS, the Drug Policy Board of this state is established in R.S. 49:219.1 et
26	seq. as a body corporate within the office of the governor for the purpose of developing
27	policies for more effectively combating illegal drugs; and
28	WHEREAS, this body is composed of twenty-three members representing state
29	agencies and other organizations which deal with the myriad ramifications of illegal drug
30	use; and

1	WHEREAS, R.S. 49:219.1 declares that it is the policy of the state of Louisiana to
2	undertake every responsible effort, explore every opportunity, invite every useful
3	contribution, and expend every available resource to eliminate the abuse of drugs and the
4	damage to people and institutions that result from such abuse; and
5	WHEREAS, the Drug Policy Board, as the leading entity of this state charged solely
6	with combating illegal drugs, and as a body comprised of members with notable expertise
7	in areas related to illegal drugs, is uniquely positioned to analyze and report to the legislature
8	on the overall impact and cost of illegal drug use.
9	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
10	authorize and direct the Drug Policy Board to coordinate a study of the overall impact and
11	estimated aggregate costs of illegal drug use in the state of Louisiana.
12	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in conducting such study, the Drug Policy Board
13	shall obtain and synthesize data, analysis, and commentary on the impact of illegal drug use
14	from each of its member agencies and organizations.
15	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Drug Policy Board shall present this study
16	in the form of a report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare and the Senate
17	Committee on Health and Welfare on or before March 1, 2012.
18	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted
19	to the chairman of the Drug Policy Board.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

Katz HCR No. 16

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