

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 195

BY REPRESENTATIVE ROSALIND JONES

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To authorize and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to evaluate the number of work release beds available in this state at the federal, state, and local levels, to make recommendations to provide for more effective reentry programs regarding work release, and to report its findings to the Legislature of Louisiana prior to the convening of the 2012 Regular Session of the Legislature.

WHEREAS, according to a recent study by the PEW Center on the States, Louisiana has the highest incarceration rate in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, corrections services, is to enhance public safety through the safe and secure incarceration of offenders, effective probation and parole supervision, and proven rehabilitative strategies that successfully reintegrate offenders into society, as well as assisting individuals and communities victimized by crime; and

WHEREAS, successful offender reentry and reintegration into the community is a matter of critical importance to the public's safety, but reentry is often unsuccessful due to the barriers ex-offenders face including, a lack of education and job skills, employment prohibition in selected occupations, mental health and substance abuse problems, access to valid identification documents, child support enforcement regulations, access to public housing and other public benefits, and strained or fragile family and community ties; and

WHEREAS, the ability of ex-offenders to obtain employment after incarceration and becoming productive members of their communities is essential to reducing recidivism rates; however, successfully finding employment is often difficult due to the reluctance of many employers to hire individuals with criminal backgrounds; and

WHEREAS, offender reentry is a crime prevention strategy, which serves to reduce crime and the number of crime victims and ultimately ensures opportunities for safer communities; and

WHEREAS, successful reentry is also a cost-savings measure which results in savings to state and local criminal justice systems; and

WHEREAS, work release programs are some of the most innovative and successful programs developed to provide for successful reentry into society; and

WHEREAS, work release programs throughout this state should be coordinated to provide the most effective reentry and rehabilitation programs to benefit all citizens of this state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby authorize and request that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections conduct a study of the work release programs offered in this state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby authorize and request that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections evaluate the number of work release beds available in this state at the federal, state, and local levels to determine if the number of work release beds is commensurate with the inmate population, to evaluate the location of work release beds to provide the best service to the inmate population, to evaluate successful job placement following work release, to provide recommendations to provide for more effective reentry programs, and to report its findings to the Legislature of Louisiana prior to the convening of the 2012 Regular Session of the Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, in conducting the study, is hereby requested to collaborate with the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the office of the attorney general, appropriate federal agencies administering work release programs, and any other agencies or entities which the department deems appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE