

2021 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 89

BY REPRESENTATIVE MARCELLE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, in conjunction with the technical and research assistance provided by the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, to study and review the Basic Jail Guidelines and current methods of evaluation and enforcement of such guidelines, to study and evaluate models for oversight, transparency, and accountability adopted in other states regarding the housing of inmates in local jail facilities, to provide recommendations for modifications to the Basic Jail Guidelines and methods of compliance evaluation and enforcement of the Basic Jail Guidelines including appropriate funding levels necessary to carry out such recommendations, and to provide a report to the Legislature of Louisiana no later than September 1, 2022.

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana entered into a bipartisan justice reinvestment process, as advanced by the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, that resulted in legislation designed to safely reduce Louisiana prison population and reinvest savings back into programs that promote successful transition back to communities; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana system which utilizes both state prisons and local jails to house persons committed to the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections presents unique and complex challenges regarding housing conditions and the provision of programming; and

WHEREAS, these complex challenges include but are not limited to limitation on state funds available for housing per diem rates to ensure local jails are able to provide reentry, educational, and vocational programming, appropriate staffing levels, employee retention, and facility spacing comparable to that of state prison facilities; and

WHEREAS, approximately twelve thousand of the persons committed to the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to serve judicially ordered sentences are housed in local jails across the state; and

WHEREAS, despite these challenges, Louisiana has made significant strides in the reduction of the prison population and the expansion of available programming and resources in local jails through the creation of regional reentry centers and other local level partnerships; and

WHEREAS, local jails that house state inmates are required to comply with the Department of Public Safety and Corrections Basic Jail Guidelines; and

WHEREAS, the nature of housing conditions and availability of reentry programming can meaningfully impact recidivism and relationships between incarcerated individuals and their families and communities; and

WHEREAS, since 2008, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections in partnership with the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association and sheriffs' offices have made significant efforts to improve the housing conditions in certain jails across the state with the creation of eleven regional reentry centers in local jails that provide pre-release, reentry, educational, and rehabilitative programming to state inmates housed in such local jails; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association seek to continue to improve housing conditions in local jails through the continued expansion of programming contingent upon the availability of funding, to revise and modify the Basic Jail Guidelines, and ensure the uniform enforcement thereof; and

WHEREAS, the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin is one of the preeminent public affairs schools in the United States and has comprehensively studied housing conditions in prisons and jails nationwide.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, in conjunction with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, to study and review the Department of Public Safety and Corrections Basic Jail Guidelines, including methods of evaluation and enforcement, mandatory and non-mandatory standards of confinement as required by the American

Correctional Association as applicable to local jails, and the programming and resource needs of local jails, to recommend modifications to the Basic Jail Guidelines and existing methods of enforcement and compliance and the expansion of programming resources in local jails, and to identify the appropriate funding levels necessary to carry out such recommendations in order to further improve the housing conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, in conjunction with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin may work with and receive information from various stakeholders in the criminal justice system, including representatives of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, the Louisiana Department of Health, and the Louisiana Supreme Court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, in conjunction with the technical assistance of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin, report their findings to the Louisiana Legislature no later than September 1, 2022.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

---

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE