

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 56

BY SENATOR BROOME

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and publicly acknowledge a series of reform accomplishments of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Youth Services, Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ).

WHEREAS, the Justice Policy Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation issued reports showing that Louisiana reduced its rate of youth incarceration by over fifty percent over a thirteen-year period, from 1997 to 2010; and

WHEREAS, both the Justice Policy Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation stated this reduction was one of the most dramatic improvements in the United States, and Louisiana is being called a national model in reducing the number of youths in out-of-home placement; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Juvenile Justice (OJJ) recently transitioned to a regionalized model of leadership and, under this new agency model, divided the state into three regions, each with a director responsible for youths at all levels of custody and supervision; and

WHEREAS, this new organization of the agency creates a more cohesive team unit and allows for more efficient and effective delivery of services; and

WHEREAS, OJJ schools celebrated the high school graduation of fifty-four youths in June of 2012, including thirty-four graduates from the Swanson Center for Youth's Southside Alternative High School, nine graduates from the Bridge City Center for Youth, and eleven graduates from the Scenic Alternative High School at Jetson Center, as well as

the awarding of GEDs to an additional fifty-seven youths while in an OJJ secure care facility in 2012; and

WHEREAS, OJJ secure care facilities have introduced two new vocational programs, including Bridge City Center for Youth's auto mechanic program, which saw twenty youths receiving certifications from its Convergent Technology vocational program, and Bridge City Center for Youth's culinary arts program, which saw nineteen students receive their ServSafe certificate, a nationally accredited food safety certification from the National Restaurant Association; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Department of Education measures the progress of all Louisiana schools, including schools inside OJJ secure care facilities, and has designated the schools at both Swanson Center for Youth and Bridge City Center for Youth as a "Top Gains school", meaning a school within the top third of all 440 Louisiana schools, in light of both schools improving their performance by doubling their projected growth target; and

WHEREAS, the American Correctional Association (ACA) reaccredited OJJ's central office in the summer of 2012 after OJJ's central office passed one hundred percent of the ACA accreditation standards; and

WHEREAS, Bridge City Center for Youth received a formal recommendation for accreditation by the ACA, which, once achieved, will mean that all OJJ offices and facilities will be ACA accredited; and

WHEREAS, Harvard University recently recognized OJJ for its innovative programming for youth, specifically praising OJJ's Service Coordination Model, a government initiative through the "Bright Ideas" program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, OJJ partnered with the Northshore Community and Technical College and the MacArthur Foundation to establish a model whereby community and technical colleges work with youth involved with the juvenile justice system, creating an individual career pathway for participating youth through career guidance, intensive case management and follow-up, education, job skills training, preemployment services, as well as job placement services upon completion of their chosen academic program.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and publicly acknowledge the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Youth Services, Office of Juvenile Justice, for the foregoing series of accomplishments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Deputy Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, Youth Services, Office of Juvenile Justice.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES