

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 58

BY SENATOR MOUNT AND REPRESENTATIVE LEGER

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To request various public agencies and private associations and stakeholders to work in collaboration through the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group to study and make recommendations to the legislature of methods which may be utilized in an effort to eliminate, to the greatest degree possible, the problem of human trafficking of minors in the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, human trafficking of minors in Louisiana clearly escalates the victimization of children, including young females, to malevolent proportions that are extremely difficult to ameliorate; and

WHEREAS, this problem imposes substantial tolls on the children who are victimized, and increased focus on this issue can reduce the adverse social and psychological impacts from minor sexual human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, according to the United State Department of Justice, the average age of entry for children victimized by the sex trade industry is twelve years and approximately three hundred thousand children in the United States are at risk every year for commercial sexual exploitation; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children estimates that as many as two million eight hundred thousand children run away each year in the United States and within 48 hours of hitting the streets, one-third of these children are lured or recruited into the underground world of prostitution and pornography; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of State estimates that approximately eighty percent of human trafficking victims are women and girls and up to fifty percent are minors; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, the Shared Hope International report entitled, "*Baton Rouge/New Orleans Area Assessment: Identification of domestic minor sex trafficking victims and their access to services, 2008*," identified numerous disturbing findings concerning this issue which included the following key findings:

(1) Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking ("DMST") is occurring in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans Area with conservative estimates from various state and nonprofit agencies of over one hundred victims in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans area since 2006.

(2) There is a lack of awareness and familiarity of the legal protections and available services by professionals likely to come in contact with DMST victims or at-risk youth in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans area.

(3) DMST victims must plead guilty to a delinquency charge in order to access services and in many instances courts and families often advocated for secure placement to minimize the potential flight risk that DMST victims often pose.

(4) There is a lack of appropriate services for DMST victims in the Baton Rouge/New Orleans area evidenced by the fact that there are a myriad of services available to victims of sexual abuse but no services are specifically designed for DMST victims.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request various public agencies and private associations and stakeholders to work in collaboration through the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group to study and make recommendations to the legislature of methods which may be utilized in an effort to eliminate to the greatest degree possible the problem of human trafficking of minors in the state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group shall hereby be created and the study group shall be composed of the following membership:

- (1) The governor of the state of Louisiana or his designee.
- (2) The secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals or his designee.
- (3) The secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services or his designee.
- (4) The state superintendent of education or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections or his designee.
- (6) The deputy secretary of the office of juvenile justice or his designee.

- (7) The president of the Louisiana Senate or his designee.
- (8) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee.
- (9) The chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court or his designee.
- (10) A member appointed by the Louisiana Law Institute.
- (11) Three members appointed by the Louisiana Human Trafficking Task Force.
- (12) A member appointed by the Association of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
- (13) A member appointed by the Louisiana District Attorney's Association.
- (14) A member appointed by the Louisiana Sheriff's Association.
- (15) The attorney general of the state of Louisiana or his designee.
- (16) A member appointed by the Louisiana Foundation Against Sexual Assault.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group shall be charged with the following responsibilities:

(1) To review, study and examine current Louisiana, other states', and federal statutes as well as relevant behavioral health research and professional literature related to the problem of the human trafficking of minors in Louisiana, including but not limited to provisions germane to a behavioral health perspective to address the legal and psychosocial issues facing minors who are so affected by their victimization from human trafficking.

(2) To seek public input to the extent practicable from youth who were previously involved in human trafficking and their parents as well as behavioral health providers regarding their concerns and suggestions to enhance Louisiana's ability to address this problem.

(3) To make recommendations regarding any amendments, updates and revisions to Louisiana's laws, including but not limited to the Children's Code, so as to render these provisions more responsive to the plight of minors who are victims of human trafficking.

(4) To draft any additional statutory provisions concerning the appropriate behavioral health treatment and rehabilitation of minors who are victims that have been involved in human trafficking regarding sexual trauma from a system of care viewpoint utilizing wraparound services and supports, including funding mechanism through the Medicaid program in accordance with the federal provisions related to human trafficking, namely, the Trafficking Victims Protection Act.

(5) To describe specific approaches and practices that can be instituted by Louisiana's child-serving departments and related child-serving stakeholders and providers to address this major problem in terms of prevention and subsequent rehabilitation and behavioral health interventions, such as model programs that have been instituted in other states, including but not limited to the "Girls Education and Mentoring Services" (GEMS).

(6) To make recommendations regarding the possibility of offering job training skills, counseling services, and state education aid for all victims of human trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the initial meeting of the study group shall be held no later than August 1, 2011, and the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group shall provide for the manner and frequency of the group's meetings and for all other administrative matters necessary in order to function as a working group.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Children and Family Services shall provide an appropriate venue to hold meetings and any incidental administrative support which might be necessary in order for the study group to carry out its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group shall submit to the governor and the Louisiana Legislature a report no later than February 1, 2012, which details the findings and conclusions of the work of the study group and which delineates provisions for the establishment of a Human Trafficking of Minors Relief Act which includes a specific implementation plan for enhancing Louisiana's ability to rehabilitate, treat, and assist minors who are victimized by human trafficking.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each person and organization which is named to serve on the Human Trafficking of Minors Study Group.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES