

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 197

BY SENATOR CLOUD

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the office of juvenile justice, youth services, Department of Public Safety and Corrections to develop a plan to provide services and opportunities that encourage youth to become more engaged in their rehabilitation, education, and job skills training, through mentor programs, animal therapies, and business classes, and submit a copy of the written plan, together with specific proposals for legislation, to the Senate Committee on Judiciary B not later than February 1, 2023.

WHEREAS, Louisiana law requires that all youth in the custody of the office of juvenile justice receive appropriate treatment, training, and education commensurate with the needs and abilities of each youth; and

WHEREAS, research supports that evidence-based treatment is the most efficient and effective means of protecting the public and reducing recidivism; and

WHEREAS, according to the office of juvenile justice's 2021 fourth quarter report, there were 365 youth in secured custody, 351 youth in nonsecured custody, and 31 youth in Families in Need of Service custody; and

WHEREAS, the office of juvenile justice uses treatment interventions, including motivation interviewing, thinking for a change, functional family therapy, and multi-systemic therapy, that help youth acknowledge accountability, teach pro-social attitudes and behaviors, and avoid risky thinking and actions; and

WHEREAS, upon adjudication and placement of youth within the custody of the office of juvenile justice, an assessment is conducted and an individualized plan is developed for rehabilitation services with the knowledge that each youth in the custody of the office will return to local communities throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, with recent challenges facing the office of juvenile justice, including violent incidences at juvenile facilities, juveniles escaping secured care facilities, and staffing shortage in the facilities, the office should develop ways to promote and encourage participation in programs that offer resources and opportunities that rehabilitate, educate, and equip youth with skills for reentry into the local communities; and

WHEREAS, because of the commitment and effort to stress the importance of rehabilitation, education, and job skills training throughout the years, the office should develop a plan to provide services and opportunities, including mentor programs with business, religious, and civic leaders; animal therapies, including canine and equine; business classes and programming that encourage financial literacy and offer youth an opportunity to see their job training skills in action; and opportunities for community interaction for low-risk youth and incentives that may encourage youth to positively engage in the programs offered by the office that seek to rehabilitate, educate, and train youth for a successful transition into the local communities.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the office of juvenile justice, youth services, Department of Public Safety and Corrections to develop a plan to provide services and opportunities that encourage youth to become more engaged in their rehabilitation, education, and job skills training, through mentor programs, animal therapies, and business classes, and submit a copy of the written plan, together with specific proposals for legislation, to the Senate Committee on Judiciary B not later than February 1, 2023.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the office of juvenile justice, youth services, Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE