

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 34

BY REPRESENTATIVES SMITH, BARROW, HILL, KATRINA JACKSON, MORENO,  
NORTON, ST. GERMAIN, THIERRY, AND WOODRUFF AND SENATORS  
BROOME AND PETERSON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend the Department of Public Safety and Corrections for moving the mobile welding unit from the Louisiana State Penitentiary to the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women to begin offering female inmates education and training programs for nontraditional, high-demand, and high-wage jobs.

WHEREAS, nationally, the wage gap between men and women improved slightly from 2011 to 2012 according to the latest United States census data with women now earning approximately seventy-eight cents on average to every dollar a man earns; and

WHEREAS, during this same period of time, despite an increasing number of women in the Louisiana workforce (forty-eight percent of full-time, year-round Louisiana labor force) according to a report by the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, the gender wage gap in Louisiana actually grew wider with women earning approximately sixty-six cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man; and

WHEREAS, engaging women in nontraditional employment, which includes any occupation that employs far fewer women than men such as trades, crafts, technology, and science fields, offers several benefits that enable women to become economically self-sufficient, support their families, and build assets to obtain a home or pursue a higher education; and

WHEREAS, with more than \$60 billion of plant expansions and new plants announced in Louisiana, according to the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission report, Louisiana faces an industry demand for more than 86,300 new skilled crafts workers through 2016, creating opportunities for women in Louisiana to pursue high-wage careers; and

WHEREAS, according to the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission report, researchers have concluded that if more women pursue nontraditional occupations, such as those in the skilled crafts, the wage gap between men and women is expected to decrease; and

WHEREAS, pipefitters, boilermakers, carpenters, electricians, instrumentation technicians, insulators, ironworkers, millwrights, heavy equipment operators, laborers, sheet metal workers, plumbers, and welders will be in high demand in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, over 201,000 women are held in penal institutions throughout the United States with female prisoners making up over eight percent of the United States prison system; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, 2,389 women in Louisiana were incarcerated, making up six percent of all inmates in Louisiana, and women released from Louisiana state prisons face high rates of unemployment and recidivism which reflect the challenge these women face in reentering society and assuming mainstream social roles upon their release; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women (LCIW) is the only female correctional facility operating at the state level, and as of October 2013, LCIW only offered its female inmates a job and life skills course and upholstery and culinary arts training; and

WHEREAS, until recently, the workforce development programs at LCIW did not train female inmates for high-demand careers in contrast to the job training provided at men's correctional facilities, which prepare males for more lucrative potential careers upon release; and

WHEREAS, in order to help reduce recidivism and increase employment opportunities for incarcerated women upon their release, a high priority must be placed on aligning the educational and training programs at LCIW with high-wage jobs, particularly high-demand craft occupations currently driving the Louisiana economy; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections announced that it will move the mobile welding unit from the Louisiana State Penitentiary to LCIW in April of 2014 to begin offering female inmates education and training programs in nontraditional, high-demand, and high-wage jobs.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana, in conjunction with the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus and the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission, does hereby commend the Department of Public Safety and Corrections for moving the welding unit from the Louisiana State Penitentiary to the Louisiana Correctional Institute for Women to begin offering female inmates education and training programs for nontraditional, high-demand, and high-wage jobs.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE