

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 37

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To continue the Louisiana Women's Incarceration Task Force that was created pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution No. 27 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature to study, evaluate, analyze, and undertake a comprehensive review of the state's criminal justice system as it relates to women and to report its findings and policy recommendations by January 1, 2020.

WHEREAS, over the last several years, Louisiana has taken steps to implement cost-effective and evidence-based practices and programs that have worked to control the growth in the state's prison population; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana should continue to build upon these successes while recognizing that incarcerated women face unique challenges, and therefore, may or may not benefit from these reform efforts; and

WHEREAS, according to United States Bureau of Justice Statistics in 2017, Louisiana had the seventh highest women's incarceration rate in the United States and incarcerated more than two thousand women at a cost of over \$50 million; and

WHEREAS, the most effective changes will be made when all those who are impacted or involved in the criminal justice system have representation in developing policies and processes related to women's incarceration, and input from all criminal justice stakeholders is essential in the development and implementation of these changes; and

WHEREAS, it is beneficial to the entire population of the state of Louisiana to continue the study of state sentencing and corrections systems for women with the goal of producing a body of research resulting in specific policy recommendations that reduce correctional populations, implement placement and behavioral practices which address and

reduce violence and harassment based upon gender, and hold all parties in the correctional system responsible for their actions; and

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution No. 27 of the 2018 Regular Session of the Legislature created the Louisiana Women's Incarceration Task Force to study, evaluate, analyze, and undertake a comprehensive review of the state's criminal justice system as it relates to women for the purpose of developing policy recommendations that work to accomplish all of the following:

(1) Develop practices and processes that avoid placing additional trauma or harm upon women as they navigate the criminal justice system.

(2) Reduce both the correctional population and recidivism of women.

(3) Address the holistic health of women to include access to hormone therapy, prenatal care, reproductive health, access to other medicine to maintain health, consistent health screenings, mental health access, and access to substance use and recovery resources.

(4) Increase and evaluate programming available to women during and after incarceration with the intention of self-determined development.

(5) Increase and ensure the availability of gender responsive resources to support the dignity and quality of life of all women.

(6) Reinvest savings into strategies shown to decrease recidivism, including improved reentry outcomes, diversion programs, and employment opportunities.

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution No. 27 provided for the membership and chairmanship of the task force; the goals, duties, responsibilities, procedures, and meeting requirements of the task force; for the administrative assistance and staffing of the task force; the authority to collaborate with community organizations and stakeholders; and the authority to request relevant data and staff expertise from the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, the Department of Public Safety and Corrections, and the office of the judicial administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby continue the Louisiana Women's Incarceration Task Force until January 1, 2020, for the purposes set forth in and in accordance with House Concurrent Resolution No. 27 of the 2018 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that on or before January 1, 2020, the task force shall prepare and submit a final report containing a detailed statement of its findings and policy recommendations to the governor, the speaker of the Louisiana House of Representatives, the president of the Louisiana Senate, and the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, and shall also make the report available to the public.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE