

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 219

BY REPRESENTATIVE HODGES

A RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reimburse the state of Louisiana for state-expended dollars used to comply with federal mandates related to illegal immigration including but not limited to education, medical care, welfare, and law enforcement services.

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article I, Section 8, Clause 4 of the Constitution of the United States, the federal government has the authority to regulate immigration; and

WHEREAS, the federal government has forced states to comply with federal mandates that require states to provide various essential services to illegal immigrants including but not limited to education, medical care, welfare, and law enforcement, with little to no reimbursement of state-expended costs; and

WHEREAS, the federal government historically has failed to adequately control the influx of undocumented immigrants into this country; and

WHEREAS, the failure of the federal government to adequately control the borders, in addition to the imposition of huge mandated but unreimbursed costs to the state of Louisiana, has led to blatant inequities in terms of exploitation of undocumented laborers and abuse of wage, safety, and child labor laws, as well as lowering wage levels for Louisiana's working poor; and

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana has been severely affected by the impact of state budgetary cutbacks; and

WHEREAS, the costs incurred by the state of Louisiana in addressing illegal immigration are increasing and continuing to burden the limited resources of the state; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Legislature created the Task Force on Illegal Immigration (task force) by House Resolution No. 175 of the 2015 Regular Session of the Legislature to study and report the fiscal, medical, nutritional, educational, judicial, criminal, penal, and economic impact of federal mandates on the state of Louisiana relative to illegal immigration; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the task force was to provide useful and critical information and statistical data to guide the efforts of Louisiana's private and public sectors in addressing the concerns of Louisiana residents regarding illegal immigration; and

WHEREAS, during the task force meeting held on October 22, 2015, task force members were presented with statistical data and information on the fiscal impact on the state of Louisiana associated with providing essential services to undocumented immigrants. Estimated dollar amounts were provided by the following state agencies:

(1) The Department of Public Safety and Corrections presented information on the impact of incarcerating illegal immigrants in Louisiana state correctional institutions including incarceration and probation and parole costs. The estimated cost to the state of Louisiana is approximately three million two hundred ninety thousand dollars (\$3,290,000) annually out of the state general fund.

(2) The Department of Education presented information on the impact on the Louisiana school system relative to the enrollment of non-United States citizens and data on the number of English Language Learners (ELL) for Louisiana public and charter schools for K-12. The estimated cost to the state of Louisiana for one public school district is approximately three million dollars (\$3,000,000) annually.

(3) The Department of Health and Hospitals presented information regarding federally mandated Medicaid services for undocumented workers including Medicaid eligibility requirements for unborn children and the costs attributed to illegal immigration on Louisiana's medical systems as a whole. The estimated cost to the state of Louisiana is approximately sixteen million one hundred thousand dollars (\$16,100,000) annually, assisting nearly five thousand (5,000) individuals with unverified immigration status.

(4) The Department of Children and Family Services presented information on the eligibility of non-United States citizens for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Based on testimony, public assistance was provided to a population of five thousand three hundred ninety-nine (5,399) non-United States citizens through Louisiana's SNAP program with a total cost to the state of Louisiana of fifty-five million dollars (\$55,000,000) in administrative costs, with an undetermined amount attributed to illegal immigrants.

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana in conjunction with local governments expends approximately nine thousand dollars (\$9,000) to educate each student in Louisiana every year; and

WHEREAS, federal limitations on the disclosure of immigration status of public school children hinders the determination of the financial impact of illegal immigration on the Louisiana public school system as a whole; and

WHEREAS, the annual costs associated with illegal immigration have burdened the state of Louisiana and its residents with expenses for law enforcement, healthcare, education, incarceration, and other essential services, and such costs have gone uncompensated by the federal government; and

WHEREAS, the costs associated with providing services to illegal immigrants should never be borne by the state of Louisiana because federal law controls the enforcement of illegal immigration; and

WHEREAS, the United States government should take immediate action to reimburse the state of Louisiana for estimated expenses that the state incurs annually as a result of the federal government's policies and mandates related to illegal immigration.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to reimburse the state of Louisiana for the state dollars expended annually to provide essential services including but not limited to the education, welfare, medical care, law enforcement, and incarceration of illegal immigrants.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to remove any impediments with respect to disclosure of immigration status of public school children such

that the financial impact of illegal immigration on the public school system in this state can be accurately determined.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES