

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 142

BY SENATOR HARRIS

A RESOLUTION

To reestablish the Judicial Structure Task Force created by House Resolution No. 30 of the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the Judicial Structure Task Force was created by House Resolution No. 30 of the 2022 Regular Session to study the caseload data and the number of judges of each appellate court and district court in Louisiana, to determine changes necessary to the existing structure of the judiciary, and to provide the most efficient use of judicial resources; and

WHEREAS, House Concurrent Resolution No. 143 of the 2011 Regular Session of the Legislature of Louisiana requested the supreme court to study the structure of the judiciary; and

WHEREAS, the task force has met twelve times since its inception to determine the efficient methodology and approach for the district courts weighted caseload study; and

WHEREAS, the National Center for State Courts developed a work point study to assess the workload of district and appellate courts throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, an updated work point study is needed to accurately assess the structure and workload of the judiciary; and

WHEREAS, the release of the detailed 2020 federal decennial census data on August 12, 2021, revealed serious population losses in some parts of the state and tremendous population growth in other parts of the state; and

WHEREAS, as population shifts from some areas of this state to others, it would be prudent to examine the caseload data from each court in the state of Louisiana to determine if the judicial resources are being used in the most efficient manner possible; and

WHEREAS, population and demographic changes in the state of Louisiana provide a reassessment opportunity to determine if reallocation of judicial resources may be needed; and

WHEREAS, it is of utmost importance to consider the case filing data, case weights, court structure and finance, and the use of support personnel in order to establish proper

funding and distribution of such funds to the courts; and

WHEREAS, the legislature will be unable to appropriate such funds as are necessary for the judicial system without receiving proper and sufficient data to support such an appropriation; and

WHEREAS, it is also necessary to study the territorial boundaries and the jurisdictional limits of each court.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby continue the Judicial Structure Task Force to study the funding and workload of judicial districts and circuits, and to propose recommendations with specific proposals for legislation, by written report to the Senate and to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:771 and 772, no later than February 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force's study include consideration of the caseload data and the number of judges of each appellate court and district court in Louisiana and provide the most efficient use of judicial resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall be composed of the following members:

(1) Three members of the House Committee on Appropriations appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

(2) Three members of the House Committee on Judiciary appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives.

(4) The chief justice of the Supreme Court, or his designee.

(5) The chair of the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeals Judges, or his designee.

(6) Two judges, at least one of whom serves in a judicial district composed of two or more parishes, who are members of the Louisiana District Judges Association selected by the president of the association.

(7) One judge who is a member of the Louisiana Judicial Council of the National Bar Association.

(8) Four members of the Senate and one judge appointed by the president of the Senate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall have all powers otherwise provided by law and by rules of the Senate, as well as all powers inherent in legislative committees, and that the legislative members shall receive the per diem and mileage authorized by law and in accordance with the rules of the member's house of the legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a member of the Senate on the task force designated by the president of the Senate shall serve as the chairman of the task force and that the members of the task force shall select any other officers it deems necessary from among its members at the first meeting of the task force.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the chairman of the task force shall cause notice of each meeting of the task force to be provided to the president of the Senate and the chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana directs the task force to solicit input, information, data, recommendations, and advice from the following persons, agencies, and organizations in connection with the study directed by this Resolution:

- (1) Louisiana Supreme Court.
- (2) Louisiana District Judges Association.
- (3) Louisiana Clerks of Court Association.
- (4) Louisiana District Attorneys Association.
- (5) Office of the state public defender.
- (6) Louisiana State Bar Association.
- (7) Louisiana Association for Justice.
- (8) National Center for State Courts.
- (9) Louisiana Association of Business & Industry.
- (10) Louisiana Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges.
- (11) Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel.
- (12) Any persons, agencies, entities, or stakeholders that the joint committee deems necessary to fulfill its purposes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force may seek staff assistance and advice from the office of the judicial administrator for the Louisiana Supreme Court.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force shall submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Senate Committee on Finance not later than February 1, 2025, and that such recommendations shall include the following:

- (1) An updated work point study from the National Center for State Courts.
- (2) Data from the National Center for State Courts on district court work flow.
- (3) The caseload data of each appellate court and district court in Louisiana.
- (4) The number of judges in each appellate court and district court in Louisiana.
- (5) A determination of any necessary changes to the existing structure of the judiciary.
- (6) A determination of the most efficient use of judicial resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, the president of the Senate, the chief justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court, the chair of the Louisiana Conference of Court of Appeals Judges, and the president of the Louisiana District Judges Association.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that one print copy and one electronic copy of any report produced pursuant to this Resolution shall be submitted to the David R. Poynter Legislative Research Library as required by R.S. 24:772.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE