

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 7

BY SENATOR MOUNT AND REPRESENTATIVES BARROW, KATZ AND WILLIAMS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Social Services to explore best practices in the field of family child day care homes and to study creating a licensing system and a quality rating system for family child day care homes.

WHEREAS, the early years of life are critical, and brain research has underscored that early experiences affect the architecture of the maturing brain during the first years of life, and the quality of that architecture establishes either a sturdy or a fragile foundation for all the learning and behavior that follows; and

WHEREAS, a family child day care home, as defined in R.S. 46:1441.1, includes any child care provider whose primary purpose is the care, supervision, and guidance of six or fewer children; and

WHEREAS, unlike day care centers, family child day care homes are not licensed in Louisiana, and Louisiana is one of only a handful of states that does not require most of these providers to go beyond minimal health and safety standards; and

WHEREAS, approximately one hundred thousand Louisiana children receive child care services in family child day care homes; and

WHEREAS, approximately twenty-eight thousand five hundred seventy-seven of these children in Louisiana receive care in a registered family child day care home that is required to meet minimal health and safety standards; and

WHEREAS, only family child day care homes that receive state or federal funds must register with the state; and

WHEREAS, family child day care homes that participate in the Child Care

Assistance Program must register with the Louisiana Department of Social Services, and such registration has only minimum requirements; and

WHEREAS, family child day care homes that participate in the Child and Adult Care Food Program must register with the Louisiana Department of Education, and such registration also has only minimum requirements; and

WHEREAS, the requirements for registration with either the Department of Social Services or the Department of Education are substantially less than the requirements of day care licensure, yet Louisiana's day care licensing standards were ranked fifty-first out of fifty-two licensing entities, including the fifty states, the District of Columbia, and the Department of Defense, by the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies "NACCRRRA" for meeting basic standards to protect the health and safety of the children in child care and to promote their school readiness; and

WHEREAS, a recent NACCRRRA report examining the state standards and oversight of family child care homes, using ten different health and safety standards essential for quality, found Louisiana ranked fifty-second in the country with a score of zero out of one hundred forty; and

WHEREAS, to improve child care in Louisiana the state has created Louisiana's Quality Start Child Care Rating System that is currently being implemented on a voluntary basis by day care centers; and

WHEREAS, studies conducted by noted economists have demonstrated the value of investment in early childhood programs; and

WHEREAS, these economists have shown that investing funds in improving the basic skills of children is the most efficient public investment; and

WHEREAS, investment in high quality early childhood programs has an immediate economic development impact as well as long-term economic returns.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Social Services to explore the best practices in the field of family child day care homes and to study creating a licensing system and a quality rating system for family child day care homes and to report initial findings to the Senate and the House of Representatives committees on health and welfare prior to March 1, 2009.

SCR NO. 7

ENROLLED

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Social Services.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES