

1 SJR78
2 184680-1
3 By Senator Ward
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 11-APR-17

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8 ESTABLISHING THE ALABAMA JUVENILE JUSTICE TASK
9 FORCE.

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11 WHEREAS, in 2008, Alabama passed the Juvenile
12 Justice Act of 2008 that resulted in a decline in the number
13 of juveniles placed in state custody; the act also prohibited
14 secure custody for particular offenses, strengthened the
15 partnership with the Administrative Office of Courts and the
16 Department of Youth Services, improved the Department of Youth
17 Services continuum of residential placements, and expanded the
18 grant program for local alternatives to commitment; and

19 WHEREAS, Alabama should build upon this promising
20 foundation and create a task force to conduct an examination
21 of the state's juvenile justice system and develop
22 data-driven, research-based policy recommendations that
23 protect public safety, hold juvenile offenders accountable,
24 control costs, and improve outcomes for youth, families, and
25 communities in Alabama; now therefore,

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
2 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the Alabama Juvenile Justice
3 Task Force is created.

4 (a) The task force is hereby authorized and directed
5 to study, evaluate, and analyze, a comprehensive review of the
6 state's juvenile justice system and, using a data-drive
7 approach, develop evidence-based policy recommendations for
8 legislative consideration that will accomplish the following:

9 (1) Protect public safety.

10 (2) Hold juvenile offenders accountable.

11 (3) Contain costs.

12 (4) Improve outcomes for youth, families, and
13 communities in Alabama.

14 (b) The Alabama Juvenile Justice Task Force shall be
15 comprised of the following members:

16 (1) The Governor, or his or her designee.

17 (2) The Speaker of the House of Representatives, or
18 his or her designee.

19 (3) The President Pro Tempore of the Senate, or his
20 or her designee.

21 (4) The House Judiciary Committee Chair.

22 (5) A designee of the House Judiciary Committee
23 Chair.

24 (6) The Senate Judiciary Committee Chair.

25 (7) A designee of the Senate Judiciary Committee
26 Chair.

27 (8) The acting Chief Justice or designee.

1 (9) The Director of the Administrative Office of
2 Courts, or his or her designee.

3 (10) Two currently presiding juvenile court judges,
4 one representing a rural county and one representing an urban
5 county, appointed by the co-chairs of the task force.

6 (11) The Commissioner of the Department of Youth
7 Services, or his or her designee.

8 (12) One district attorney licensed to practice in
9 Alabama with experience in representing children in
10 delinquency proceedings appointed by the co-chairs of the task
11 force.

12 (13) One public defender licensed to practice in
13 Alabama with experience in representing children in
14 delinquency proceedings appointed by the co-chairs of the task
15 force.

16 (14) One law enforcement official representing a
17 county with a local juvenile detention facility appointed by
18 the co-chairs of the task force.

19 (15) The Executive Director of Alabama Children
20 First, or his or her designee.

21 (16) One representative of the Association of County
22 Commissions of Alabama.

23 (c) Each legislative member of the task force shall
24 be entitled to his or her regular legislative compensation,
25 per diem, and travel expenses for each day he or she attends a
26 meeting of the task force in accordance with Amendment 871 of
27 the Constitution of Alabama of 1901. These payments shall be

1 paid out of any funds appropriated for the use of the
2 Legislature.

3 (d) The co-chairs of the task force shall be
4 selected by the members of the task force during the first
5 organizational meeting of the task force.

6 (e) All appointing authorities shall appoint their
7 designees so that diversity of gender, race, and geographical
8 areas are represented by the makeup of the state and the
9 diversity and demographics of the Alabama juvenile justice
10 population.

11 (f) The majority of the membership of the task force
12 shall constitute a quorum and shall meet at the call of the
13 co-chairs, or upon affirmative vote of a majority of the task
14 force. All members must be notified in writing of all meetings
15 at least five days before the date on which a meeting of the
16 task force is scheduled.

17 (g) The task force shall conduct a comprehensive
18 assessment of the Alabama juvenile justice system and develop
19 and come to consensus on a set of findings and legislative,
20 policy, and procedure reforms that will positively impact
21 Alabama's system, including, but not limited to, focusing
22 state resources on higher-level offenders, reducing recidivism
23 by investing in evidence-based programs and practices, and
24 improving government performance and accountability. The task
25 force shall receive technical assistance from the Pew
26 Charitable Trusts to provide the members of the task force

1 with research and data analysis of Alabama's juvenile justice
2 system and relevant statutes and administrative policies.

3 (h) The task force shall direct the Department of
4 Youth Services and the Administrative Office of Courts to
5 provide relevant data and staff expertise to the technical
6 assistance providers promptly upon request.

7 (i) (1) The task force shall hold its first meeting
8 no earlier than May 20, 2017, and no later than June 30, 2017,
9 at the call of the co-chairs.

10 (2) The task force shall meet no less than six
11 times.

12 (j) The task force shall prepare and submit a final
13 report that contains a detailed statement of the findings and
14 policy recommendations of the task force to the Governor,
15 leadership and ranking members of the Legislature, and the
16 Chief Justice of the Alabama Supreme Court by February 15,
17 2018. The report shall be made available to the public.

18 (k) The task force shall be dissolved upon
19 submission of the report.