

1 WHEREAS, as the state agency tasked with ensuring the safety of children, the
2 Department of Children and Family Services, referred to hereafter as "DCFS", makes
3 recommendations and decisions for child placement and custody based on the immediate and
4 ongoing needs of the child for safety and permanency in order to secure the well-being of
5 the child; and

6 WHEREAS, DCFS and the courts of this state make dedicated efforts to balance the
7 safety, permanency, and well-being of children with the constitutionally protected rights of
8 family privacy and parental decisionmaking; and

9 WHEREAS, the process of making child placement and permanency decisions is
10 often extremely challenging for family members and other persons who are involved in the
11 life of the child; and

12 WHEREAS, DCFS provides foster care services to over eight thousand children
13 annually; and

14 WHEREAS, within the past three years, DCFS, through its Faith in Families
15 Initiative, has exceeded national standards by improving the rate of children being reunified
16 with their families within twelve months of entry into foster care from seventy-two percent
17 to seventy-six and six tenths percent, and also improving the rate of adoption of children
18 within twenty-four months of entry into foster care from twenty-eight percent to forty-two
19 percent; and

20 WHEREAS, while DCFS has demonstrated significant improvements in achieving
21 permanency for children in foster care expeditiously, ongoing quality improvement is
22 essential for the state to make further progress in achieving safe and permanent family
23 placements for children in foster care; and

24 WHEREAS, in order to support continued improvement of the Louisiana child
25 welfare system, it is prudent for the legislature to periodically call for a review of applicable
26 laws and policies concerning child welfare to ensure that the state is as responsive as
27 possible to the needs and best interests of our state's children in this state; and

28 WHEREAS, R.S. 24:204 provides that among the purposes of the Louisiana State
29 Law Institute are securing the better administration of justice, conducting scholarly legal

1 research and scientific legal work, and promotion of better adaptation of Louisiana law to
2 present social needs.

3 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
4 urge and request the Children's Code Committee of the Louisiana State Law Institute to
5 study laws and policies relative to continuing contact by parents and other relatives with
6 children who are subjects of child in need of care proceedings.

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Children's Code Committee shall include in
8 its study an examination of potential changes to laws and policies which could expedite
9 permanency for children in foster care.

10 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Children's Code Committee shall report
11 findings of its study and recommendations for any changes to laws and policies which would
12 promote the safety and well-being of children to the House Committee on Health and
13 Welfare, the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, the House Committee on the
14 Administration of Criminal Justice, and the Senate Committee on Judiciary A no later than
15 sixty days prior to the convening of the 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature of
16 Louisiana.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
18 director of the Louisiana State Law Institute and the secretary of the Department of Children
19 and Family Services.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HCR 125 Engrossed

2015 Regular Session

Hoffmann

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Requests that the committee include in its study an examination of laws and policies which could expedite permanency for children in foster care.

Requests the committee to report findings of its study and recommendations for any changes to laws and policies which would promote the safety and well-being of children to the legislative committees on health and welfare, the House Committee on the Administration of Criminal Justice, and the Senate Committee on Judiciary A no later than 60 days prior to the convening of the 2016 R.S.