2020 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 42

BY REPRESENTATIVE JAMES

CRIMINAL/SENTENCING: Requests the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to study the use of solitary confinement in Louisiana

1	A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
2	To urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to gather data on the
3	use of solitary confinement in Louisiana, to collect personal statements from at least
4	two hundred current inmates on their experiences in solitary confinement, and to
5	report its findings to the Louisiana Legislature by May 2021.
6	WHEREAS, according to a recent report by Solitary Watch, the American Civil
7	Liberties Union of Louisiana, and the Jesuit Social Research Institute across the United
8	States, eighty thousand to one hundred thousand incarcerated people are locked in prison or
9	jail cells without any meaningful human interaction for twenty-two to twenty-four hours a
10	day for weeks, years, and even decades straight; and
11	WHEREAS, according to the same report, prolonged social isolation can inflict
12	permanent psychological and neurological damage and, because of the severe physical and
13	mental damage that extreme isolation can cause, the United Nations has warned that the use
14	of solitary confinement beyond fifteen days can be tantamount to torture and should be
15	banned; and
16	WHEREAS, in 2016, the VERA Institute for Justice found that over seventeen
17	percent of people in Louisiana prisons were in solitary confinement, which is almost four
18	times the national average; and
19	WHEREAS, the report by Solitary Watch, the American Civil Liberties Union of
20	Louisiana, and the Jesuit Social Research Institute, which is based on a survey of over seven
21	hundred inmates currently in solitary confinement, raises many questions about the use of

solitary confinement in Louisiana prisons and the need for a comprehensive study of solitary
confinement is clear.

3	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
4	urge and request the Department of Public Safety and Corrections to gather basic data on the
5	use of solitary confinement in Louisiana, including but not limited to demographic data on
6	persons who are in solitary confinement, the duration of each person's solitary confinement,
7	and the reasons for placement in solitary confinement. The demographic data gathered by
8	the department shall include but is not limited to information on the person's race, sex, and
9	age, the offense for which the person was convicted, the length of the person's sentence, the
10	number of years the person has been incarcerated, and the number of years remaining on the
11	person's sentence. The department shall also collect personal statements from at least two
12	hundred current inmates on their experiences in solitary confinement.
13	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Department of Public Safety and Corrections
14	shall issue a report of its findings to the Louisiana Legislature by May 2021.
15	BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be provided
16	to the secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

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 42 Original 2020 Regular Session

James

Requests the Dept. of Public Safety and Corrections to gather basic data on the use of solitary confinement in La., including but not limited to demographic data on persons who are in solitary confinement, the duration of each person's solitary confinement, and the reasons for placement in solitary confinement. The department shall also collect personal statements from at least 200 current inmates on their experiences in solitary confinement. Requires the department to issue a report of its findings to the legislature by May 2021.