

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 222

BY REPRESENTATIVES EDMONSTON, CHASSION, AND KNOX

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct a review of factors affecting children who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in this state and their families.

WHEREAS, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, ASD is a neurological and developmental disorder that affects how people interact, communicate, learn, and behave with others; and

WHEREAS, there are many determining symptoms for an ASD diagnosis; and

WHEREAS, ASD symptoms include but are not limited to difficulties with social interaction and communication, issues with transitioning from one activity to another, problems with focusing on certain details, and unusual reactions to sensations; and

WHEREAS, children who are diagnosed with ASD often experience various health-related conditions which include but are not limited to epilepsy, depression, anxiety, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder; and

WHEREAS, between 2000 and 2020, one in thirty-six children were diagnosed with ASD; and

WHEREAS, statistically, the amount of grade school children diagnosed with ASD has risen in recent years; and

WHEREAS, as a result, family members, caretakers, and educators of children with ASD have been impacted by the increased needs that caring for a child with ASD presents; and

WHEREAS, according to the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2022, only twenty-one percent of those with disabilities like ASD were employed; and

WHEREAS, additionally, males are three to four times more likely to be diagnosed with ASD than females while the statistics of children diagnosed with ASD remains to be genetically diverse; and

WHEREAS, this data-based diversity indicates that genetics do not account for all instances of ASD; and

WHEREAS, the increased prevalence of ASD in certain socioeconomic demographics and geographic locations has also generated great interest in the potential involvement of environmental factors and toxicants in our environment; and

WHEREAS, the role of environmental factors and toxicants in the development of ASD is critical, because environmental factors impact epigenetics significantly and influence the risk for developing ASD; and

WHEREAS, ASD is associated with roughly four million dollars in lifetime costs per individual; and

WHEREAS, the lifetime costs in the United States to date for ASD is more than seven trillion dollars; and

WHEREAS, the projected societal costs for ASD in the United States over the next decade is estimated to increase significantly if prevalence remains the same; and

WHEREAS, this data illustrates the need to evaluate and identify risks, etiology, environmental factors, and toxicants that affect ASD rates within our state; and

WHEREAS, an evaluation of the infrastructure needed to provide equitable diagnostics, treatments, and support services with a sound economic impact on children with ASD and their families is pertinent.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana Department of Health to conduct a review of factors affecting children who are diagnosed with ASD in this state and their families and submit its findings in the form of a written report to the House Committee on Health and Welfare by February 1, 2025.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the review shall include but not be limited to access to early diagnosis, treatment options, medical and homecare costs, education challenges, employment challenges, environmental factors, toxicants, epigenetics, and long-term care options.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, subject to the availability of data, the review by the Louisiana Department of Health shall identify the prevalence of ASD in this state by region and demographic.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, subject to the availability of data, the review by the Louisiana Department of Health shall identify the environmental and toxicant factors that may be affecting children in regions of the state wherein ASD diagnosis has increased in comparison to other regions of the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, subject to the availability of data, the review by the Louisiana Department of Health shall identify the fiscal impact of ASD on the individuals affected by the disorder and how it impacts the state's healthcare and education systems.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that, in its production of the written report required by this Resolution, the Louisiana Department of Health shall work with colleges and universities in this state that have research centers to gain clinical expertise and insight on autism spectrum disorder.

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

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES