

1 HJR226  
2 169116-1  
3 By Representatives Rowe, Harper, Weaver, Hill (M), Pettus,  
4 Wood, Patterson, Hill (J), Ball, Farley, Fridy and Faulkner  
5 RFD: Rules  
6 First Read: 12-MAY-15

8 CREATING THE COMMISSION ON TRUANT, AT-RISK,  
9 DELINQUENT YOUTH.

10  
11 WHEREAS, the multiple problems of truant, at-risk,  
12 and delinquent youth are a growing concern of educators,  
13 service providers, and citizens of the state; and

14 WHEREAS, truancy is a major indicator of a youth's  
15 withdrawal from school and can lead to more serious problems  
16 for these youths and their communities, including juvenile  
17 court referrals and long-term involvement in the justice  
18 system; and

19 WHEREAS, keeping a child in school reduces the  
20 likelihood that the child will end up in the juvenile justice  
21 system where there is a high risk of recidivism; and

22 WHEREAS, criminalization of truancy and use of  
23 formal court interventions is an ineffective method of  
24 ensuring students will return to school and often acts to  
25 further alienate students from school; and

26 WHEREAS, local communities need to significantly  
27 increase their ability to effectively supervise and educate

1 this truant, at-risk, and delinquent population and to assist  
2 these youth in developing appropriate behavior in order to  
3 avoid becoming part of the criminal justice system and to  
4 achieve academic and career success; and

5 WHEREAS, research supports the concept that  
6 intervention and prevention programs, including mental health  
7 and substance abuse treatment, have long-term benefits and are  
8 more cost-effective than detention, incarceration, or social  
9 dependence; and

10 WHEREAS, cooperation and coordination among agencies  
11 and community-based organizations that have jurisdiction over,  
12 or provide services to, truant, at-risk, and delinquent youth  
13 provide the best chance for ensuring the educational and  
14 career success of that population; and

15 WHEREAS, a detailed study of systems that impact  
16 that population can provide complete information to guide the  
17 development and implementation of programs beneficial to such  
18 youth; now therefore,

19 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
20 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That there is hereby created the  
21 Commission on Truant, At-risk, Delinquent Youth to study  
22 methods to keep children out of the juvenile justice system by  
23 improving related laws, regulations, and procedures. The  
24 commission shall be comprised of the following members:

25 (1) The Chairs of the House and Senate Judiciary  
26 Committees, or their designees.

(2) One member of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(3) One member of the Senate to be appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate.

(4) One member to be appointed by the Governor.

(5) One school resource officer appointed by the Alabama Association of Police Chiefs.

(6) One representative of the Juvenile Probation Officers Association to be selected by the association.

(7) The Executive Director of the Department of Youth Services (DYS), or his or her designee.

(8) One juvenile judge to be selected by the Juvenile Judges Association.

(9) The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Human Resources, or his or her designee.

(10) The Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Mental Health, or his or her designee.

(11) The State Superintendent of Education, or his or her designee.

(12) Two superintendents of K-12 public schools, one representing a city system and one representing a county system, selected by the School Superintendents of Alabama.

(13) The President of the State Bar Association, or his or her designee.

(14) The Executive Director of the Alabama District Attorney's Association, or his or her designee.

(15) Two experts in the fields of truancy, at-risk youth, or alternative education, one appointed by each Chair of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees.

(16) One representative from VOICES for Alabama's Children.

(17) One representative from Alabama Appleseed.

(18) One representative from Alabama Children's First.

(19) The Executive Director of the Alabama Network of Family Resource Centers, or his or her designee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Governor shall appoint the chair once all appointments have been made to the commission. Membership shall be inclusive and shall reflect the racial, gender, geographic, urban, rural, and economic diversity of the state, as well as the diversity and demographics of the K-12 and juvenile justice populations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the commission shall study the complicated issues and identify causes of truancy and potential legislative solutions to reduce the reliance on juvenile justice referrals of delinquent youth. The commission shall study a broad range of issues related to at-risk youth including, but not limited to: Truancy; data on reported crimes and arrests of delinquent juveniles; juvenile court procedures; behavioral health, mental health, and substance abuse treatment needs; problem-solving suggestions and policies of the courts; recidivism rates; and alternative sentencing. The commission shall consider the following:

(1) The social and academic needs of truant, at-risk, and delinquent youth, including, but not limited to, the collection of county-specific data on truancy and juvenile court referrals.

(2) The effectiveness of existing social and academic programs in this state that serve these youth populations and where additional resources are needed.

(3) Evidence-based practices and programs that have been successful in meeting the social and academic needs of these youth populations, including, but not limited to, Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS).

(4) The current level of state and local funding provided to state agencies serving these youth populations and the availability of partnership grants for community-based programs.

(5) The financial impact of providing social and academic services through local schools and communities for these youth populations, including, but not limited to, costs associated with current detention referrals and the implementation or expansion of recommended programs.

(6) Recommended strategies for serving the academic, mental health, and social needs of youth returning from the Department of Youth Services or the Department of Corrections.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the commission shall issue a written report of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations for proposed legislation concerning truant, at-risk, delinquent youth to the Legislature no later than the

1       15th day of the 2016 Regular Session, whereupon it shall stand  
2 dissolved and discharged of any further duties.

3                   BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That each non-legislative  
4 member of the task force may be reimbursed for expenses  
5 related to attending meetings consistent with the policies of  
6 the various appointing authorities. Upon the request of the  
7 chair, the Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House of  
8 Representatives shall provide necessary clerical assistance  
9 for the work of the commission. Each legislative member of the  
10 task force shall be entitled to his or her regular legislative  
11 compensation, per diem, and travel expenses for each day he or  
12 she attends a meeting of the commission in accordance with  
13 Amendment 871 of the Constitution of Alabama of 1901. These  
14 payments shall be paid out of any funds appropriated to the  
15 use of the Legislature by means of warrants drawn by the state  
16 Comptroller on the State Treasury.