A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Joint State Government Commission to establish an advisory committee to study the effects of parental incarceration on the children of incarcerated parents, to recommend a system for determining and assessing the needs of the children of incarcerated parents, the services available to them and the barriers to accessing those services and to make a report with recommendations to the Senate.

WHEREAS, In the United States, more than 2 million children have a parent who is currently incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 10 million children in the United States have or have had a parent who was under correctional supervision at some point in the child's life; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 65% of the women in State prison are mothers of children under 18 years of age, and nearly two-thirds of these mothers lived with their children before they were arrested and incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 55% of the men in State prison are fathers of children under 18 years of age, and nearly half of these fathers lived with their children before they were arrested and incarcerated; and

19
WHEREAS, Parental imprisonment and involvement in the
criminal justice system can impose serious financial hardships
on a family and can lead to disrupted living arrangements for
children, factors which are linked to an increased risk of
delinquency; and
WHEREAS, Children of incarcerated parents suffer emotional
and psychological effects when separated from their parents,
beginning with the trauma of arrest and continuing through
incarceration; and
WHEREAS, Incarcerated parents often lose contact with their
children and once they lose contact, it is very difficult to
reestablish that relationship when the parent is released; and
WHEREAS, More than half of all incarcerated parents in the
United States report never receiving a personal visit from their
children; and
WHEREAS, Several barriers exist that affect the overall
experience of parent-child visits in prison, including
inadequate or inconvenient visiting hours, difficulty in
scheduling visits, geographical location of prison facilities
and visiting procedures or facilities that are uncomfortable or
lack child-friendly visiting areas; and
WHEREAS, Finding ways for a child to connect with the child's
incarcerated parent helps the child understand why the parent is
absent, eases family reunification when the parent returns home
and helps reduce the parent's chance of recidivism; therefore be
it
RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Joint State Government
Commission to establish an advisory committee to study the
effects of parental incarceration on the children of
incarcerated parents, to recommend a system for determining and
accessing the needs of the children of incarcerated parents, the
services available to them and the barriers to accessing those
services; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the advisory committee be comprised of
approximately 30 members and include persons representing all
relevant aspects of the criminal justice and social welfare
systems, representatives of academia, the faith community, child
advocates, private and public organizations involved in criminal
justice and social welfare issues and other persons who have an
interest and expertise in the issue of children of incarcerated
parents; and be it further
RESOLVED, That the advisory committee report to the Senate
with its findings and recommendations no later than two years
from the date that this resolution is adopted.