

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 2

WHEREAS, current studies indicate that children left at home alone and unsupervised have lower academic test scores, have higher absentee rates at school, exhibit higher levels of fear, stress, nightmares, loneliness, and boredom, are 1.7 times more likely to use alcohol, and are 1.6 times more likely to smoke cigarettes; and

WHEREAS, recent data shows that violent juvenile crime rates soar and children are most likely to be victims of a violent crime committed by a nonfamily member between the hours of 3 p.m. and 8 p.m., the hours immediately after school; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Center for Juvenile Justice, children are at greater risk of being involved in crime, substance abuse, and teenage pregnancy in the hours after school, especially between the hours of 3 p.m. and 4 p.m.; and

WHEREAS, the most common activity for children after school is watching television, resulting in an average 23 hours of television watching per week; and

WHEREAS, the parents of more than 800,000 Missouri school-age children work outside the home; and

WHEREAS, according to the estimates of the Urban Institute of the United States Census Bureau, at least 7 million and as many as 15 million "latchkey children" return to an empty house on any given afternoon; and

WHEREAS, in the United States, families worry about their children being unsafe and having too much idle, unsupervised time; and

WHEREAS, the United States Departments of Education and Justice report that children in quality out-of-school programs have better academic performance, school attendance, behavior, and greater expectations for the future; and

WHEREAS, children who attend high quality out-of-school programs have better peer relations, emotional adjustment, conflict resolution skills, grades, and conduct in school compared to their peers who are not in out-of-school programs; and

WHEREAS, children who attend out-of-school programs spend more time in learning opportunities, academic activities, and enrichment activities, and spend less time watching television than their peers; and

WHEREAS, children who attend out-of-school programs miss fewer days of school, have better homework completion, better school behavior, and higher test scores; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has recognized the beneficial impact of out-of-school programs to our youth, and has increased the funding of out-of-school programs administered by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and

WHEREAS, 92% of all Americans believe there should be organized activities for all youth during out-of-school hours; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that less than 25% of all school-age children attend any out-of-school program, leaving 75% of our youth without a safe, supportive, and enriching environment during the unsupervised hours after the formal school day ends; and

WHEREAS, the Joint Interim Committee on After-School Programs has studied several of the above-mentioned issues during the tenure of the Ninety-first General Assembly and recommends that a similar study committee be established to continue the study during the tenure of the Ninety-second General Assembly:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Senate of the Ninety-second General Assembly, First Regular Session, the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the "Joint Legislative Committee on Out-of-School Programs" be created to be comprised of five members of the Senate, appointed by the President Pro Tem of the Senate and the Senate Minority Floor Leader and five members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the House Minority Floor Leader; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee continue and expand the in-depth studies conducted by the prior Joint Interim Committee on After-School Programs and to make a comprehensive analysis of the quantity and quality of Missouri out-of-school programs, including the solicitation of information from appropriate state agencies, public schools, youth development organizations, law enforcement agencies and juvenile officers, youth development and education experts, and the public (including youth) regarding the status of out-of-school programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee, in consultation with the Departments of Elementary and Secondary Education, Social Services, and all other relevant agencies, make recommendations for an efficient and effective development plan to provide the opportunity for every Missouri school-age child to access quality out-of-school programs and design a system to train, mentor, and support out-of-school programs, and thereby guarantee their sustainability; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee be authorized to hold hearings as it deems advisable, and that the staffs of Senate Research, House Research, and the Committee on Legislative Research provide such legal, research, clerical, technical, and bill drafting services requested by the committee; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the General Assembly endorses all of state government to enthusiastically encourage our citizens to engage in innovative out-of-school programs and activities that

ensure that all Missouri school-age children are not only safe, but also productive when the school day ends; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the committee report its recommendations and findings to the General Assembly by January 1, 2005, and the authority of such committee shall terminate on December 31, 2004, unless reauthorized.

Unofficial
Resolution
Copy