ENROLLED SENATE
JOINT
RESOLUTION NO. 48

By: Leftwich (Debbe) of the Senate

and

Staggs of the House

A Joint Resolution directing various agencies to study issues relating to children of incarcerated women and make recommendations; requiring annual presentation of such recommendations; stating legislative intent to give attention and support to certain programs; directing distribution; and declaring an emergency.

WHEREAS, the Special Task Force for Women Incarcerated in Oklahoma heard many expressions of concern about the children of women who are incarcerated; and

WHEREAS, the task force was told that the Oklahoma Department of Human Services cannot intervene in such situations unless there are actual allegations of abuse or neglect; and

WHEREAS, often the children of incarcerated mothers are being cared for by the same persons responsible for childhood physical, sexual, or emotional abuse of the mother or domestic violence toward the mother; and

WHEREAS, the task force also received research-based reports and testimony that abuse and other destructive behaviors are often passed along from generation to generation; and

WHEREAS, breaking the cycles of violence, abuse, drug addiction, related crimes, and other socially costly behaviors is in the best interests of the state and all its citizens as well as the health of the children involved; and

WHEREAS, the task force also received encouraging reports that residential treatment of addicted women in settings where their children can live with them and also receive therapy offers hope for breaking the cycles of destructive behaviors; and

WHEREAS, the facilities currently being funded by the state for such residential treatment services are extremely limited.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 2ND SESSION OF THE 49TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

SECTION 1. The Oklahoma Commission on Children and Youth is hereby directed to take the lead, working with the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Department of Human Services, and the Department of Corrections, to study the living conditions of children of incarcerated women and make reports with recommendations that will help break the destructive cycles and restore the opportunities for the children to live healthy and productive lives.

SECTION 2. The reports and recommendations shall be presented to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives on or before November 1, 2004, and each November 1 thereafter.

SECTION 3. The Legislature hereby states its intent to give careful attention and high priority in this 2nd Session of the 49th Oklahoma Legislature and in forthcoming sessions to garner support and funding for expansion of residential treatment programs for women and children.

SECTION 4. The Secretary of State is hereby directed to distribute copies of this resolution to the Director of the Commission on Children and Youth, the Commissioner of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Director of the Department of Human Services, and the Director of the Department of Corrections.

SECTION 5. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this resolution shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 4th day of May, 2004.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 31st day of March, 2004.

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Presiding Officer of the House
of Representatives