

Regular Session, 2013

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 192

BY SENATOR PEACOCK

FEDERAL PROGRAMS. Requests Louisiana congressional delegation to review the basis for the discontinuance of funding of the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Young Marines Program with a Juvenile Accountability Block Grant with the United States Department of Justice, Office of Civil Rights.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Louisiana congressional delegation to review the basis for the  
3 discontinuance of funding of the Bossier Sheriff's Young Marines Program through  
4 a Juvenile Accountability Block Grant with the United States Department of Justice,  
5 Office of Civil Rights.

6 WHEREAS, since 2002, the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office has successfully  
7 administered the Bossier Sheriff's Young Marines Program, a program sanctioned by the  
8 United States Marine Corps which provides community-based physical education programs  
9 that are designed to teach young men and women, ages 8 to 18, respect for their bodies  
10 through physical fitness, which in return will instill resistance to the temptations of illegal  
11 drugs, alcohol and tobacco use; and

12 WHEREAS, the focus of the program is character-building, along with core values  
13 of discipline, leadership, teamwork and commitment and instills into the participants the  
14 ideals of honesty, integrity and respect and at-risk youth developing goals for academic  
15 success; and

16 WHEREAS, the program has been partially funded by the Juvenile Accountability  
17 Block Grant (JABG) provided by the Louisiana Commission on Law Enforcement (LCLE);  
18 and

1           WHEREAS, because of the success of the program, local judges started sentencing  
2 court-ordered juveniles to the program as a diversion from jail time; however, the Young  
3 Marines Program was never intended to be a "diversion" program and the LCLE staff has  
4 recommended that the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office create a new separate program,  
5 specifically for court-ordered juveniles; and

6           WHEREAS, in December 2012, the sheriff's office submitted a JABG application  
7 for the Bossier Youth Diversion Program which was created similar to the Bossier Sheriff's  
8 Young Marines Program, while also incorporating "Character Counts" and "The Great Body  
9 Shop", as recommended by LCLE staff, for court-ordered juveniles only; and

10          WHEREAS, the sheriff's office was advised by the LCLE that pursuant to the  
11 direction of the United States Department of Justice, Office for Civil Rights, the program  
12 can "NOT include prayer as part of the Diversion program. Any prayer, even if voluntary,  
13 needs to be separate in time or location from the Diversion Program activities."; and

14          WHEREAS, on February 22, 2013, the sheriff's office responded by email to the  
15 LCLE, "In response to the prayer issue, the time that was offered for prayer was optional for  
16 all of the kids. It was led by any child that wanted to volunteer and if there wasn't a  
17 volunteer, it became a few moments of silence."; and

18          WHEREAS, on March 7, 2013, LCLE responded, at the direction of the United  
19 States Department of Justice, requesting an official letter, "...signed by the Sheriff, which  
20 states that there will be no prayer activities conducted during the Diversion program..." and  
21 that the LCLE, "...will not be able to issue an award until this letter is received."; and

22          WHEREAS, at that time, the sheriff withdrew the grant request; and

23          WHEREAS, on February 6, 2013, the Bossier Parish Sheriff's Office submitted a  
24 Program Plan Worksheet requesting the one-time Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention  
25 funds available for the Bossier Sheriff's Young Marines Program and was denied upon the  
26 same grounds involving prayer activities; and

27          WHEREAS, at this time, the sheriff's office has been divested of funding by the  
28 LCLE for both the Bossier Sheriff's Young Marines Program and the Bossier Youth  
29 Diversion Program due to prayer and the mention of God in the programs.

30          THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Louisiana congressional

1 delegation are hereby urged and requested to review with the United States Department of  
2 Justice, Office of Civil Rights, the basis for the discontinuance of funding of the Bossier  
3 Sheriff's Young Marines Program with a Juvenile Accountability Block Grant.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to each  
5 member of the Louisiana congressional delegation, the governor, the Louisiana Commission  
6 on Law Enforcement, and the Bossier Parish sheriff.

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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part  
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Jerry J. Guillot.

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DIGEST

Peacock

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