

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 50

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A RESOLUTION

To recognize April 17, 2014, as HIV/AIDS Legislative Awareness Day and to welcome the members of the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network to the state capitol.

WHEREAS, the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network (LAAN) serves as a statewide network to build the capacity of all HIV/AIDS community stakeholders and empower them to strategically engage legislators to keep HIV/AIDS a priority; and

WHEREAS, the LAAN was established in August 2002 in response to excessive delays in receiving executed grant contracts from the state and local governments, which made it difficult to deliver services to clients and created concern for infected and affected individuals; and

WHEREAS, at that time, the political and social climate of the state was not sympathetic with the implementation of HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives and began a campaign to reign in condom distribution; as a result, the coalition of executive directors of HIV/AIDS advocacy groups saw the need to expand to include members of the affected community to advocate for the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS and to educate the public officials about the epidemic; and

WHEREAS, with financial assistance from the pharmaceutical industry, the coalition called a meeting in Alexandria, Louisiana, of people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, to brainstorm on how to make the community at large aware of the rapid expansion of the epidemic and its devastating effects; and

WHEREAS, the result of this meeting was the formation of the LAAN on August 28, 2002; it called for an organizational structure consisting of a steering committee of nineteen members selected to represent each of the nine Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) Regions; and

WHEREAS, in 2003, the first event of the newly formed LAAN was held at the state capitol during the legislative session to educate legislators about the epidemic; the event was done in conjunction with the Louisiana Commission on HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C, a legislatively mandated body with the mission of educating and advising the governor and the legislature on issues relating to HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C; and

WHEREAS, this event became known as Legislative Awareness Day and has taken place every year since 2003, with growing attendance; LAAN has actively monitored the legislative sessions, to promote healthy legislation and caution against detrimental laws; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of this day is to educate legislators about the monetary and health costs and the impact of HIV/AIDS to Louisiana, to challenge legislators to support appropriate resource allocation for HIV/AIDS treatment and research, and to hold legislators accountable for commitments that they make in support of HIV/AIDS legislation; and

WHEREAS, the LAAN seeks to provide strategic leadership in HIV/AIDS advocacy that is powerful, effective, committed, and inclusive, and done with integrity using factual information in order to motivate those affected and infected with HIV/AIDS and influence those who make policy decisions; and

WHEREAS, the LAAN merits the highest measure of commendation for its service to the citizens of Louisiana who have been diagnosed with or have been affected by HIV/AIDS and for its commitment and steadfast dedication to eradicating HIV/AIDS.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize April 17, 2014, as HIV/AIDS Legislative Awareness Day, does hereby welcome the members of the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network to the state capitol, does hereby recognize the LAAN as vital to improving advocacy for all people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS throughout Louisiana, does hereby commend the members of the LAAN as they seek to change fundamental failings in the relevant political and social systems in order to garner social justice for all people living with HIV/AIDS in the state, and does hereby extend the very best wishes for continued success to the leaders and members of the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the executive director of the Louisiana AIDS Advocacy Network.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES