

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 227

BY REPRESENTATIVE WESLEY BISHOP

SCHOOLS: Requests the Orleans Parish School Board and the New Orleans City Council to address blighted property near Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School in the Lower Ninth Ward prior to the 2015-16 school year

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Orleans Parish School Board and the New Orleans City Council to
3 address blighted property near Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School in the
4 Lower Ninth Ward prior to the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year.

5 WHEREAS, the Lower Ninth Ward suffered catastrophic damage during Hurricane
6 Katrina; and

7 WHEREAS, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School is located in the Lower
8 Ninth Ward just a few blocks from one of the levee breaches that occurred during the
9 hurricane along the Industrial Canal; and

10 WHEREAS, this school began as an elementary school but has been growing steadily
11 in recent years, and in 2012, it celebrated the high school graduation of its first senior class;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, the school plays a very important role in the community as the only
14 public high school in the Lower Ninth Ward; it has become a true neighborhood institution
15 and is beloved by its students, faculty, staff, and alumni and by the community as a whole;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, the school's mission is to create and maintain an orderly, trusting
18 environment where teaching and learning are innovative and exciting and where students are
19 taught to read, write, compute, and think critically according to their fullest potential; and

1 WHEREAS, the school is expanding its high school program into a newly
2 constructed facility that is expected to open in the fall of 2015; and

3 WHEREAS, though the Lower Ninth Ward has made great progress in the near-
4 decade since the storm due to the hard work and dedication of its passionate and tireless
5 residents, there are still blighted areas near this school that many feel tarnish neighborhood
6 pride, bring down property values, and pose hazards for community members, including the
7 children attending the school; and

8 WHEREAS, there is both a strong need and strong community support for the
9 improvement of the area surrounding the school, and community members have expressed
10 concern publicly about the state of the tall grass and weeds that are protruding into
11 neighborhood streets and interfering with school bus routes, the vermin that occupy the
12 overgrown areas, and the dumping in neglected and unkempt lots of everything from
13 mattresses to construction materials and debris; and

14 WHEREAS, addressing the blight near the school, which is a cornerstone of this
15 community, would not only reinforce this unique neighborhood's committed and steadfast
16 revitalization efforts but would serve as a welcome and hopeful example of the ongoing
17 restoration and rebuilding that is possible throughout the Lower Ninth Ward, the city of New
18 Orleans, and all hurricane-affected areas in Louisiana as the tenth anniversary of Katrina
19 approaches; and

20 WHEREAS, the improvement of this area is long overdue, and in order to enable the
21 school to fulfill its mission of creating and maintaining an orderly, trusting environment, it
22 is necessary and appropriate that the Orleans Parish School Board and the New Orleans City
23 Council address the blight near the school before faculty, students, and staff return for the
24 opening of the new school facility in the fall of 2015.

25 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
26 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Orleans Parish School Board and
27 the New Orleans City Council to address blighted property near Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
28 Charter School in the Lower Ninth Ward prior to the beginning of the 2015-2016 school
29 year.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted
2 to the president of the Orleans Parish School Board, who shall be responsible for
3 disseminating copies to each member of the school board, and to New Orleans City
4 Councilman James Austin Gray II, who represents the Lower Ninth Ward and who shall be
5 responsible for disseminating copies to each member of the city council.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 227 Original

2015 Regular Session

Wesley Bishop

Requests that the Orleans Parish School Board and the New Orleans City Council address the blighted property near Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School in the Lower Ninth Ward prior to the beginning of the 2015-16 school year.