HLS 16RS-4216 ORIGINAL

2016 Regular Session

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 139

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

EDUCATION: Encourages the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, public school districts, and public schools to develop guidelines for content standards and curricula relative to religious issues

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2	To encourage the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, public school
3	districts, and public schools to develop guidelines for content standards and curricula
4	relative to the protection of religious rights of students, parents, and taxpayers.
5	WHEREAS, religions address and answer ultimate questions or issues regarding the
6	cause and nature of life and the universe and how life should be lived ethically and morally
7	as individuals, families, and cultures; and
8	WHEREAS, prevailing federal court interpretations of religion under the First
9	Amendment of the Constitution of the United States include a multiplicity of theistic,
10	pantheistic, and nontheistic belief systems that address such religious issues; and
11	WHEREAS, the concept of religion is often confined to traditional theistic belief
12	systems; and
13	WHEREAS, since the publication of the Humanist Manifesto in 1933 and the
14	immigration of foreign cultures with a variety of belief systems, many believe that the
15	United States has become a pluralistic society that includes nontheistic and pantheistic
16	religions, such as Atheism, Secular Humanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism,
17	Hinduism, Wicca, Scientism, New Age religions, and others; and
18	WHEREAS, according to the Pew Research Center, such nontheistic belief systems
19	are expanding at a rate of approximately one percent per annum and accounted for
20	approximately twenty-five percent of the United States population in 2014; and

1	WHEREAS, since 1940 the United States Supreme Court has held that the
2	Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States
3	applies not only to congress but to all state and local governments and agencies, including
4	public schools; and
5	WHEREAS, the Establishment Clause has been construed by the United States
6	Supreme Court to preclude government endorsement or disparagement of any religion or of
7	any particular religious view; and
8	WHEREAS, the Establishment Clause has been used to systematically remove the
9	mention of God and the core tenets of traditional theistic religions from public elementary
10	and secondary schools without concurrent removal of the religious issues; and
11	WHEREAS, many believe that this systematic exclusion of theistic views has had
12	the effect of causing public schools to discriminate in favor of, and to indoctrinate children
13	to accept, nontheistic religious views about where we come from, the nature of life, and how
14	it should be lived ethically and morally; and
15	WHEREAS, many also believe that the nontheistic views about religious issues are
16	incorrectly promoted as "secular" or "not religious" since religion is being limited to theistic
17	beliefs; and
18	WHEREAS, there are widespread concerns that curricula which favors nontheistic
19	views about religious issues is not neutral as it effectively endorses nontheistic religious
20	world views over traditional theistic world views; and
21	WHEREAS, for public education to be truly secular and neutral, it must identify
22	issues that are inherently religious and then objectively inform an age appropriate audience
23	about those issues so that the goal and effect of the education is religiously neutral.
24	THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that in order to instill viewpoint and religious
25	neutrality and to protect the religious rights of parents, students, and taxpayers in public
26	elementary and secondary education, the Legislature of Louisiana hereby encourages the
27	State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and all local public schools and school
28	districts to develop guidelines that reflect and accomplish the following objectives:
29	(1) Identify the content of education standards and curricula that address religious
30	issues.

1 (2) Analyze such standards and curricula to determine if they are designed to be 2 taught in an objective and age-appropriate manner so that the goal and effect of the teaching 3 strives to be religiously neutral.

- (3) Revise or eliminate such standards and curricula that do not comply with the provisions of (2) above.
- (4) Publish on appropriate websites content that addresses religious issues so that public elementary and secondary education is transparent to parents, students, and taxpayers.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state superintendent of education who shall be responsible for disseminating a copy to each public school district.

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)]

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Encourages the State Bd. of Elementary and Secondary Education, public school districts, and public schools to develop guidelines for content standards and curricula relative to the protection of religious rights of students, parents, and state taxpayers.