

2017 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 36

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Louisiana State Law Institute to study the prospective use of the term "d/Deaf" in law, and to report findings of the study in the form of recommendations to the legislature concerning the term.

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana recognizes that language used to refer to persons with disabilities and other persons with exceptionalities shapes and reflects attitudes toward and perceptions of those persons by society; and

WHEREAS, through consideration of legislative instruments such as House Bill No. 63 of the 2014 Regular Session and House Bill No. 253 of this 2017 Regular Session, the legislature has engaged in careful review and evaluation of terminology in Louisiana law referring to persons with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the deaf community encompasses distinct cultures, the members of which self-identify with either the term "deaf" (lower case) or "Deaf" (capitalized); and

WHEREAS, "deaf" and "Deaf" are distinct in that the former term refers, generally, to persons who identify with people who have hearing ability, and who regard their own hearing loss solely in medical terms; while the latter, capitalized term refers to people who identify as culturally deaf, and whose life experiences are shaped primarily by deaf culture; and

WHEREAS, the combination term "d/Deaf" has emerged as an inclusive means of referring to these two groups within the deaf community; and

WHEREAS, proponents of wider use of "d/Deaf" in written language argue that the term is more than a linguistic expedient as it embodies both sense and reference and has a generally accepted definition; and

WHEREAS, like the law, language is a human creation which evolves to meet the needs of human society.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Louisiana State Law Institute to study the prospective use of the term "d/Deaf" in law and to report findings of the study in the form of recommendations to the legislature concerning the term.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana State Law Institute shall report findings and recommendations resulting from the study requested by this Resolution to the legislature no later than thirty days prior to the convening of the 2018 Regular Session.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the director of the Louisiana State Law Institute and to the executive director and each member of the Louisiana Commission for the Deaf.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE