

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 79

BY REPRESENTATIVE AMEDEE

STUDENTS: Requests that public school governing authorities take certain actions relative to helping students avoid injury due to the use of heavy backpacks

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request each public school governing authority to take certain actions relative
3 to helping students avoid injury due to the use of heavy backpacks.

4 WHEREAS, overloaded school backpacks are causing an increasing problem of back
5 pain and spinal strain in students in elementary and secondary schools across the nation; and

6 WHEREAS, because spinal ligaments and muscles are not fully developed until after
7 sixteen years of age, overweight backpacks are a source of repeated low-level stress that may
8 result in chronic neck, shoulder, or back pain in children; and

9 WHEREAS, reviews of data have revealed more than seven thousand emergency
10 room visits and more than twenty-eight thousand doctor's office visits per year by children
11 for backpack-related injuries; and

12 WHEREAS, studies of the effects on children of carrying heavy backpacks have
13 shown that heavy loads carried on the back have the potential to compress intervertebral disc
14 height and damage the soft tissues of the shoulder causing microstructural damage to the
15 nerves; and

16 WHEREAS, students' textbooks are much heavier now than many years ago, and in
17 addition to textbooks, students often carry computers, cell phones, water bottles, running
18 shoes, band instruments, and other equipment; and

19 WHEREAS, more than ninety percent of children carry a school backpack, which
20 studies have found can weigh as much as twenty-five percent of the child's body weight; and

1 WHEREAS, backpacks are often not worn correctly and are frequently slung over
2 one shoulder or allowed to hang significantly below the waistline, increasing the weight on
3 the shoulders and causing the child to lean forward when walking or standing to compensate
4 for the weight; and

5 WHEREAS, rolling backpacks remove the weight from a child's back but are
6 sometimes not allowed in schools due to a concern over being a trip hazard in the hallways
7 or because of the difficulty of carrying them up and down stairways.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
9 urge and request each public school governing authority to take the following actions to help
10 students avoid injury due to the use of heavy backpacks:

11 (1) Discourage students from carrying a backpack that weighs more than ten percent
12 of the student's body weight.

13 (2) Encourage the use of ergonomic backpacks with individualized compartments
14 to efficiently hold books and equipment.

15 (3) Encourage students to wear both shoulder straps and not sling a backpack over
16 one shoulder.

17 (4) Encourage the use of wide, padded, adjustable backpack straps that fit the
18 student's body.

19 (5) Encourage students to leave the heaviest books at school and urge teachers to
20 give handouts or workbooks that can be used for homework assignments.

21 (6) Encourage schools to make electronic versions of textbooks available as federal
22 and state funding for that purpose becomes available.

23 (7) Offer students integrated education about backpacks by using a hanging scale
24 in the classroom to allow students to weigh their backpacks and enter the weight into a graph
25 that would track the weights and use the data to determine whether a student's backpack is
26 too heavy and provide information about ways to lighten the weight of a backpack.

27 (8) Encourage school administrators to work with parent-teacher organizations to
28 assess the extent to which their students use overweight backpacks and to promote
29 innovative homework strategies that lessen the need for students to take school materials and
30 books from school to home each day.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
2 executive director of the Louisiana School Boards Association, who shall disseminate a copy
3 to each city, parish, or other local public school board, and to the state superintendent of
4 education, who shall disseminate a copy to the governing authority of each charter school.

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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Requests that each public school governing authority take specified actions to help students avoid injury due to the use of heavy backpacks.