SLS 24RS-571 ORIGINAL

2024 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 22

BY SENATOR MIZELL

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SUBSTANCE ABUSE. Designates Seymore D'Fair as Louisiana's Drug-Free Ambassador.

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To designate Seymore D'Fair as the Drug-Free Ambassador for Louisiana.

WHEREAS, Seymore originally was the mascot for the 1984 Louisiana World Exposition and thereafter, he became a cultural icon in Louisiana, symbolizing joy, community spirit, and unity; and

WHEREAS, as a Pelican, mirroring the Louisiana State Bird, Seymore's role as the first mascot in the history of World Expositions (circa 1851) was groundbreaking, introducing diverse cultures and communities to the natural beauty of the state and its cultural identity; and

WHEREAS, because the beloved Pelican transcended traditional mascot and ambassador duties Seymore began his journey from a state emblem to a worldwide figure of significance, laying the foundation for his future endeavors in social advocacy; and

WHEREAS, post-exposition, Seymore became a key figure in promoting drug awareness and prevention through various initiatives led by the Seymore D'Fair Foundation, a 501(3)c nonprofit organization dedicated to children and youth advocacy, specializing in pre-adolescent drug awareness, education, and prevention; and

WHEREAS, the 1987 Cajun Critters & Kids 'Just Say NO!' to Drugs program was carefully designed for pre-adolescent students aged 5-11 with two interconnected parts

1 which includes a sixty minutes live children's theater production focused on drug awareness 2 and peer pressure and a classroom component that echoes the themes of the theater 3 performance; and 4 WHEREAS, the Cajun Critters & Kids 'Just Say NO!' to Drugs program setup allowed students to actively engage and apply what they observed in the performance to their 5 6 classroom activities, fostering a deeper understanding and personal connection to the content 7 taught; and 8 WHEREAS, another Seymore D'Fair Foundation drug prevention program called the 9 "Kiki's Red Ribbon School Celebration" focuses on drug awareness and prevention 10 education for the underserved pre-adolescent student demographic in grades K-6 is marked 11 by an annual event which creates a memorable experience that reinforces the anti-drug 12 message in a positive and celebratory atmosphere; and 13 WHEREAS, Kiki's program setup brings together educators, parents, and local 14 leaders engaging in interactive methods, including activities, games, and discussions, ensuring active student participation and better retention of the information provided; and 15 16 WHEREAS, between ACT 283 of 2018 Regular Legislative Session and Seymore D 'Fair Foundation, a "Louisiana is Better with ME 100% Drug Free" specialty license plate 17 18 campaign was created; and 19 WHEREAS, the specialty license plate campaign is a constant reminder of the commitment to living drug-free with all sales directly channeled into funding drug-20 21 prevention education programs; and 22 WHEREAS, the statistics on drug use in Louisiana paints a concerning picture, 23 highlighting an urgent need for effective drug prevention strategies, treatment, and drug 24 addiction services; and 25 WHEREAS, a significant portion of the population, 8.37% of adults and 7.31% of minors reported needing treatment, but not receiving it, underscoring a gap in accessible 26 27 drug addiction services; and

WHEREAS, the effectiveness of using character mascots like Seymore in

educational settings is supported by teaching methodologies and psychology and are visually

appealing with their friendly nature thus making learning engaging and enjoyable; and

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WHEREAS, this approach aligns with the psychological understanding that children respond positively to characters they perceive as fun and approachable, leading to better engagement and retention; and

WHEREAS, in drug prevention efforts, Seymore D'Fair established rapport with diverse age groups, engaging, interactive methods effectively foster understanding and memory retention in children, makes his distinctive persona and inventive approach to messaging an exemplary ambassador for imparting crucial drug prevention life lessons and values; and

WHEREAS, Seymore D'Fair's role as the Drug-Free Ambassador can significantly lead to lasting changes in attitudes and behaviors about drug use, reduce drug abuse rates and foster collaborative community approach to tackling drug related issues, and create a healthier, safer environment for all citizens, particularly the youth while contributing to a comprehensive approach to drug prevention, treatment, and overall wellness in Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate Seymore D'Fair as Louisiana's Drug-Free Ambassador.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Seymore D'Fair through the Seymore D'Fair Foundation.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Ann S. Brown.

DIGEST SCR 22 Original 2024 Regular Session

Mizell

Designates Seymore D'Fair, as Louisiana's Drug-Free Ambassador.