

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 153

BY REPRESENTATIVE JEFFERSON AND SENATORS THOMPSON AND  
WALSWORTH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study issues relative to the implementation of the Course Choice Program, including but not limited to the enrollment of students by course providers and the approval of course providers by the state board and to submit a report of its findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than September 30, 2013.

WHEREAS, as stated in the Constitution of Louisiana, it is the goal of the public educational system to provide learning environments and experiences at all stages of human development that are humane, just, and designed to promote excellence in order that every individual may be afforded an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential; and

WHEREAS, current law provides for the Course Choice Program, through which students may enroll in courses offered by a course provider; and

WHEREAS, current law defines a course provider as an entity that offers individual courses in person or online, including but not limited to online or virtual education providers, postsecondary education institutions, including any postsecondary institution under the management of the Board of Supervisors of Community and Technical Colleges, and corporations that offer vocational or technical course work in their field; current law also requires that course providers be authorized by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to provide such courses; and

WHEREAS, in an editorial by state superintendent of education John White, he states that the Course Choice Program is "a first-of-its-kind initiative to provide every parent and

every student unprecedented access to educational courses provided beyond the walls of the student's school"; and

WHEREAS, any time a new program is conceived and implemented, particularly one which provides for the education of Louisiana's children "beyond the walls" of their schools, every possible precaution must be taken to protect children's safety and to ensure their access to a high quality education; and

WHEREAS, Superintendent White's editorial also states relative to the Course Choice Program that "in every case, the parent and the student get to choose what's best for them"; however, there are school system officials, principals, parents, and students who have publicly expressed concern about a perceived lack of sufficient oversight relative to the enrollment of students by some course providers; and

WHEREAS, a Course Choice Overview and Fact Sheet posted on the website of the state Department of Education states that course providers must "pass an intensive four-step selection process"; and

WHEREAS, there are already some safeguards in place, but because the safety and education of Louisiana's children are of utmost importance, the processes by which course providers enroll students and by which course providers are vetted by BESE prior to approval merit a rigorous reexamination; and

WHEREAS, in order to fulfill the state's constitutional duty of affording every student an equal opportunity to develop to his full potential, it is crucial that the implementation of the Course Choice Program receive a thorough evaluation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to study issues relative to the implementation of the Course Choice Program, including but not limited to the enrollment of students by course providers and the approval of course providers by the state board, and to submit a report of its findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Committee on Education not later than September 30, 2013.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and to the state superintendent of education.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE