

2019 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 65

BY REPRESENTATIVE BISHOP

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to work with the Department of Education and the Louisiana School Boards Association to provide firearm and hunter education as a voluntary physical education elective in public high schools.

WHEREAS, Louisiana law requires a person born after September 1, 1969, to have successfully completed a firearm and hunter education program approved by the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries prior to receiving a hunting license; and

WHEREAS, firearm and hunter education programs teach the state's youth not only how to hunt but also how to use weapons responsibly, how to respect weapons and their capabilities, and tries to make them understand that the use of a firearm is not akin to a video game, all of these being lessons that could reduce the occurrence of severe incidents or mistakes involving a firearm; and

WHEREAS, firearm and hunter programs include instruction in areas such as understanding responsibilities as a sportsman; understanding hunting ethics; demonstrating the safe handling of firearms; understanding and identifying different types of firearms, ammunition, and the correct usage of both; learning how to practice safe firearms cleaning and storage in the home; the basic principles of wildlife management, conservation, and preservation; and understanding how hunters can be conservation tools in wildlife management; and

WHEREAS, familiarity with these principles, equipment, and responsibilities can benefit our society overall and may well reduce the number of gun-related accidents; and

WHEREAS, several states, such as Kansas, Iowa, and South Carolina, have instituted programs whereby students in their middle and high schools may opt to meet their firearm and hunter education obligations through their physical education classes; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana's firearm and hunter education program requires passage of an online test of the laws and knowledge of firearm equipment; basic shooting skills; basic hunting skills; how to be a safe, responsible, and ethical hunter; and survival skills; followed by four to six hours of hands-on experience in outdoor shooting, blood trailing, tree stand safety, and more survival skills; and

WHEREAS, all of these principles and learning experiences are necessary for those people who want to be outdoors hunting but the classes also provide knowledge and skills that are generally useful across the board and are skills and information that can easily and quickly be relayed through voluntary physical education classes; and

WHEREAS, since the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries is currently statutorily tasked with overseeing the firearm and hunter education programs, having them partner with the Department of Education and the Louisiana School Boards Association allows delivery of training that is consistent and at the core of the department's mission, and enables the department to reach out to the next generation of Louisiana sportsmen and women through programs coordinated throughout the state's schools.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to work with the Department of Education and the Louisiana School Boards Association to provide hunter education as a physical education elective in the public high schools.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the secretary of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, the state superintendent of education, and the executive director of the Louisiana School Boards Association.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE