

2018 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 512

BY SENATOR GATTI

SCHOOLS. Provides relative to school employee participation in student-initiated prayer.
(gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 17:2115.11, relative to student-initiated prayer; to provide
3 relative to school employee participation in student-initiated prayer; to provide for
4 conditions; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 17:2115.11 is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

7 §2115.11. Prayer; student-initiated; conditions

8 A.(1) Upon the request of any public school student or students, the proper
9 school authorities may permit students to gather for prayer in a classroom,
10 auditorium, or other space that is not in use, at any time before the school day begins
11 when the school is open and students are allowed on campus, at any time after the
12 school day ends provided that at least one student club or organization is meeting at
13 that time, or at any noninstructional time during the school day. A school employee
14 may be assigned to supervise the gathering if such supervision is also requested by
15 the student or students and the school employee volunteers to supervise the
16 gathering.

17 ~~B.~~(2) Any school employee may attend and participate in the gathering if it

1 occurs before the employee's work day begins or after the employee's work day ends.

2 ~~€.(3)~~ Any parent may attend the gathering if the parent adheres to school
3 procedures for approval of visitors on the school campus.

4 ~~Đ.(4)~~ The students may invite persons from the community to attend and
5 participate in the gathering if other school organizations and clubs are allowed to
6 make similar invitations. Such persons shall adhere to school procedures for approval
7 of visitors on the school campus.

8 **B. Notwithstanding the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, a**
9 **school employee may, upon request of a student or students, attend and**
10 **participate in a gathering or pray with students during the employee's work**
11 **day, provided that:**

12 **(1) The parent or legal guardian of each student in attendance at the**
13 **gathering or with whom the employee prays has submitted a signed request that**
14 **the employee may participate in the gathering or pray with his child.**

15 **(2) Attendance and participation in the gathering or prayer does not**
16 **interfere with the employee's prescribed work duties.**

17 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
18 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
19 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
20 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
21 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Cheryl Serrett.

DIGEST

SB 512 Engrossed 2018 Regular Session Gatti

Present law (R.S. 17:2115.3) provides that no law, rule, or policy may deny any student attending a public elementary or secondary school the right to participate in voluntary, student-initiated, student-led prayer.

Present law (R.S. 17:2115.11) provides conditions for student-initiated prayer and allows school employees to volunteer to supervise student-initiated prayer. Also provides that any school employee may participate in the gathering if it occurs before the employee's work day begins or after the employee's work day ends.

Proposed law retains present law and additionally allows a school employee, upon request of a student or students, to attend and participate in a gathering where there is student-initiated prayer or to pray with a student during the employee's work day, provided that the parent or legal guardian of each student in attendance at the gathering, or with whom the employee prays, has submitted a signed request that the employee participate in the gathering or pray with his child and such participation does not interfere with the employee's prescribed work duties.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Amends R.S. 17:2115.11)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Allows school employees to pray with a student upon request if the student's parent or legal guardian has provided a signed request and the prayer does not interfere with the employee's work duties.