

Regular Session, 2013

HOUSE BILL NO. 660

BY REPRESENTATIVE KATRINA JACKSON

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

SCHOOLS: Provides for policies, procedures, and programs relative to school prayer, the pledge of allegiance, and instruction regarding the pilgrim fathers and the U.S. flag in certain school districts

1 AN ACT

2 To enact R.S. 17:2118, relative to school policies and programs; to require the State Board
3 of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish a policy and develop procedures
4 relative to school prayer and the pledge of allegiance; to require the state board to
5 develop a program of instruction for public schools with regard to the pilgrim fathers
6 and the flag of the United States of America; to authorize local school boards to
7 provide for the display of historic documents; to provide for applicability subject to
8 voter approval; to provide for legislative findings; and to provide for related matters.

9 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

10 Section 1. R.S. 17:2118 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 §2118. School prayer; pledge of allegiance; United States flag; historical
12 documents; display; policy; procedures; programs; state board

13 A. The State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, or "state
14 board", shall establish a policy and develop procedures to allow public school
15 students to participate in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the "Pledge of
16 Allegiance to the Flag" at the commencement of each school day. Such policy and
17 procedures shall include but not be limited to provisions for the following:

18 (1) Student participation in the recitation of the prayer and pledge shall be
19 voluntary.

1 (2) Students shall be reminded that the Lord's Prayer is the prayer that the
2 pilgrim fathers recited when they came to America in search for freedom.

3 (3) Students shall be informed that these exercises are not meant to influence
4 an individual's personal religious beliefs in any manner.

5 (4) The recitations shall be conducted so that students learn of America's
6 great freedoms, including the freedom of religion symbolized by the recitation of the
7 Lord's Prayer.

8 B. The state board shall develop a program of instruction for public schools
9 with regard to the pilgrim fathers.

10 C. The state board shall develop a program of instruction for public schools
11 with regard to the flag of the United States of America, including instruction in
12 etiquette, the correct use and display of the flag, and other patriotic exercises as may
13 be related. The program of instruction, at a minimum, shall include the provisions
14 of 4 U.S.C. § 1 through 3 and 5 through 9.

15 D. A local school board may purchase or otherwise acquire and provide for
16 display in each classroom copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg
17 Address, and other documents the local board deems significant to the history of
18 Louisiana and the United States.

19 E. The provisions of this Section shall apply only to public schools located
20 in a school district where the matters as proposed in this Section have been submitted
21 to and approved by at least two-thirds of the qualified electors in the district who
22 vote on the proposition at a regularly scheduled election held in accordance with the
23 Louisiana Election Code. Local school boards may provide for putting a proposition
24 on the ballot in accordance with the Louisiana Election Code that contains the
25 matters proposed in this Section. Upon such approval, the local superintendent of
26 the school district shall provide notification and verification of such approval to the
27 State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

28 Section 2. The legislature finds that as a continuation of the policy of teaching our
29 country's history and as an affirmation of the freedom of religion in this country, we should

1 authorize the recitation of the traditional Lord's prayer and the pledge of allegiance to the
2 flag in public schools.

3 Section 3. This Act shall be known as the "Parental Choice Historical Prayer and
4 Pledge Act".

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)]

Katrina Jackson

HB No. 660

Abstract: Requires BESE to adopt policies and procedures relative to school prayer and the pledge of allegiance and to develop a program of instruction relative to the pilgrim fathers and the U.S. flag. Provides for applicability in school districts subject to voter approval.

Proposed law requires the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to establish a policy and develop procedures to allow public school students to participate in the recitation of the Lord's Prayer and the "Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag" at the commencement of each school day. Such policy and procedures shall include but not be limited to provisions for the following:

- (1) Student participation in the recitation of the prayer and pledge shall be voluntary.
- (2) Students shall be reminded that the Lord's Prayer is the prayer that the pilgrim fathers recited when they came to America in search for freedom.
- (3) Students shall be informed that these exercises are not meant to influence an individual's personal religious beliefs in any manner.
- (4) The recitations shall be conducted so that students learn of America's great freedoms, including the freedom of religion symbolized by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

Requires BESE to develop a program of instruction for public schools with regard to the pilgrim fathers and a program with regard to the flag of the United States of America, the latter to include instruction in etiquette, the correct use and display of the flag, and other patriotic exercises as may be related.

Permits local school boards to purchase or otherwise acquire and provide for display in each classroom copies of the Declaration of Independence, the Gettysburg Address, and other documents the local board deems significant to the history of Louisiana and the U.S.

Provides that proposed law shall apply only to public schools located in a school district where the matters proposed in proposed law have been approved by at least 2/3 of the qualified electors voting on the proposition in the district. Authorizes school boards to provide for putting a proposition on the ballot containing the matters proposed in proposed law. Provides that upon such approval, the local superintendent of the school district shall provide notification and verification of such approval to BESE.

(Adds R.S. 17:2118)