

2026 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 329

BY REPRESENTATIVE DICKERSON

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: Provides relative to the definition of "first responder"

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 23:1017.1(6) and R.S. 29:739(C) and to enact R.S. 29:723(21),
3 relative to first responders; to expand the definition of first responders to include the
4 United Cajun Navy; to provide for definitions; and to provide for related matters.

5 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

6 Section 1. R.S. 23:1017.1(6) is hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

7 §1017.1. Definitions

8 Unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the following words and
9 terms, when used in this Part, ~~shall~~ have the following meanings:

10 * * *

11 (6) "First responder" means a volunteer engaged in activities involving the
12 Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness pursuant to
13 R.S. 29:721 et seq., and first responders as defined in R.S. 29:723 including but not
14 limited to medical personnel, emergency and medical technicians, volunteer firemen,
15 auxiliary law enforcement officers, state agency essential workers, emergency
16 service dispatchers, emergency response operators, electrical linemen and members
17 of the United Cajun Navy as defined by R.S. 29:723, and members of the Civil Air
18 Patrol.

19 * * *

1 Section 2. R.S. 29:739(C) is hereby amended and reenacted and R.S. 29:723(21) is
2 hereby enacted to read as follows:

3 §723. Definitions

4 As used in this Chapter:

5 * * *

6 (21) "The United Cajun Navy" means the nonprofit organization registered
7 with the secretary of state by charter number 43009455N.

8 * * *

9 §739. Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact

10 * * *

11 C. Definitions

12 As used in this Section, "first responder" refers to those individuals who in
13 the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of
14 life, property, evidence, and the environment, including emergency response
15 providers as defined in Section 2 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002, 6 U.S.C.
16 101, as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works,
17 and other skilled support personnel, such as equipment operators, ~~and~~ electrical
18 linemen, and members of the United Cajun Navy that provide immediate support
19 services during prevention, response, and recovery operations consistent with
20 Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8.

21 * * *

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)]

HB 329 Original

2026 Regular Session

Dickerson

Abstract: Expands the definition of "first responder" to include members of the United Cajun Navy and defines "the United Cajun Navy".

Present law with regard to the La. Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, defines "first responder" as a volunteer engaged in activities involving the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness pursuant to present law (R.S. 29:721 et seq.), and first responders as defined in present law (R.S. 29:723),

including medical personnel, emergency and medical technicians, volunteer firemen, auxiliary law enforcement officers, state agency essential workers, emergency service dispatchers, emergency response operators, and members of the Civil Air Patrol.

Present law provides that "first responder" refers to those individuals who in the early stages of an incident are responsible for the protection and preservation of life, property, evidence, and the environment, as well as emergency management, public health, clinical care, public works, and other skilled support personnel, such as equipment operators that provide immediate support services during prevention, response, and recovery operations consistent with Homeland Security Presidential Directive 8.

Proposed law retains present law and includes the United Cajun Navy in the definition of "first responder".

Proposed law defines "the United Cajun Navy" as the nonprofit organization registered with the secretary of state by charter number 43009455N.

Proposed law provides that members of the United Cajun Navy shall be considered first responders only during weather emergencies as declared by the governor pursuant to present law (R.S. 29:721 et seq.). Further provides that nothing in proposed law shall relieve an employer of its responsibilities pursuant to present law (C.C. Art. 2320).

Proposed law provides that the term "first responder" may be displayed on the uniform of members of the United Cajun Navy, but members of the United Cajun Navy shall be considered private sector employees who are not governed by the state or any local governmental subdivision of the state.

Proposed law includes the United Cajun Navy as other skilled support personnel for purposes of the Intrastate Mutual Aid Compact.

(Amends R.S. 23:1017.1(6) and R.S. 29:739(C); Adds R.S. 29:723(21))