

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 60

BY SENATOR CLAITOR AND REPRESENTATIVE GREENE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Clement Mubungirwa on his amazing accomplishments and recognize his achievements and to urge and request the Louisiana High School Athletic Association to grant a hardship or waive its age eligibility requirements to allow Clement Mubungirwa to participate in LHSAA sports programs in the 2014-2015 school year.

WHEREAS, Clement Mubungirwa and his family, which consisted of his widowed single mother, Masika Kaniki, and her seven children arrived in the United States in 2007 as a refugee family from Uganda sponsored by Catholic Charities, with little more than the clothes on their backs; and

WHEREAS, the family had endured years of horrific atrocities at the hands of the rebel forces terrorizing their homeland and Masika's husband and other family members were brutally murdered; and

WHEREAS, Clement bravely escaped with his family, on foot in the dark of night, traveling many miles to the limited safety of various camps where refugees faced deplorable conditions and malnutrition; and

WHEREAS, shortly after being granted political asylum, the family immigrated to the United States and arrived in Baton Rouge with no English language skills; and

WHEREAS, in January 2008, the school-age children were placed in public schools in East Baton Rouge Parish in grades consistent with their chronological ages so Clement, then age twelve, was placed in the seventh grade; and

WHEREAS, Clement's education assessment revealed that he had received little to no formal education, did not speak English, received little or no math and reading training, and had the equivalent of a first grade education; and

WHEREAS, as Clement began to interact with other students and new friends, he became better equipped to communicate the difficulties he experienced in the classroom setting where he was teased and bullied by some classmates and he felt overwhelmed by all the amount and difficulty of schoolwork assignments he was expected to complete; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2008, Clement attended a Catholic elementary school, where pre-admission evaluation showed that while he was very intelligent, he lagged behind his grade level academically, so he was again placed in the seventh grade, which he successfully completed as well as the eighth grade, working tirelessly to catch up with his classmates, all the while exhibiting an amazing attitude and aptitude for learning; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2010, he was admitted to Episcopal High School where another round of pre-admission testing ensued and Clement repeated the eighth grade to further strengthen his academic skills; and

WHEREAS, Clement worked tirelessly in the classroom and after school to maintain his grades and during that time he was introduced to the sport of football, exhibited promising athletic skills, and began to participate in that school's sports program; and

WHEREAS, in the fall of 2014, Clement will enter his senior year at Episcopal High School and will also become nineteen years of age on July 7, and according to the tenets of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association (LHSAA), will be ineligible to participate due to age parameters; and

WHEREAS, the LHSAA administers sports programs for public and private schools throughout the state and establishes eligibility requirements for student participation in such programs; and

WHEREAS, LHSAA's basic guidelines for age eligibility provide that a student cannot become nineteen years of age prior to September first of the current school year; and

WHEREAS, according to the LHSAA guidelines, Clement is ineligible because of his age; and

WHEREAS, the association's rules also provide a procedure that if a student-athlete is found ineligible under the LHSAA's basic eligibility requirements, a hardship can be granted; and

WHEREAS, the amazing life of Clement Mubungirwa to journey from Uganda as

a child to a junior in high school in Louisiana warrants consideration and supports a favorable decision from the LHSAA to allow him to participate in sports in his senior year.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Clement Mubungirwa for his amazing accomplishments and recognize his academic and athletic achievements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Louisiana High School Athletic Association is hereby urged and requested to grant a hardship exception or waive its age eligibility requirements to allow Clement Mubungirwa to participate in LHSAA's sports programs in his senior year, 2014-2015.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Clement Mubungirwa, the executive director of the Louisiana High School Athletic Association, and the principal of Episcopal High School.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES