

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 136

BY REPRESENTATIVES SMITH, BARROW, AND ST. GERMAIN

ECONOMIC DEVEL/TRAINING: Requests the Department of Economic Development to encourage new and existing Louisiana companies to create strategies that would increase the number of women employed in STEM positions

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To urge and request the Department of Economic Development to encourage new and
3 existing Louisiana companies to create strategies aimed to increase the number of
4 women employed in STEM positions.

5 WHEREAS, STEM is an acronym and term referring to the fields of study in
6 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics; and

7 WHEREAS, schools across the state of Louisiana have recognized that STEM
8 disciplines are the key to high-wage paying jobs across the country; and

9 WHEREAS, studies have frequently shown that the pay gap between women and
10 men in Louisiana is among the largest in the country; and

11 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Women's Policy and Research Commission is the state
12 commission charged with monitoring the status of Louisiana women for the purpose of
13 evaluating their economic, educational, and health issues, identifying and analyzing trends
14 that impact women's health and prosperity, and providing policy recommendations to
15 address the challenges faced by women in our state; and

16 WHEREAS, research of the commission finds a current achievement gap between
17 males and females in STEM disciplines in Louisiana; and

18 WHEREAS, nationally, the wage gap between men and women improved slightly
19 from 2011 to 2012 and according to the latest United States census data, women now earn
20 seventy-eight and eight tenths cents on average to every dollar a man makes; and

1 WHEREAS, during this time period from 2011 to 2012, the gender wage gap in
2 Louisiana actually widened and in 2012, Louisiana women working full time, year-round
3 earned just sixty-six and nine tenths cents for every dollar earned by a Louisiana man; and

4 WHEREAS, in 2012, the Louisiana gender wage gap was thirty-three percent, a gap
5 two cents greater than in 2011; and

6 WHEREAS, the disparity in earnings between Louisiana women and men has
7 consistently ranked Louisiana forty-ninth or fiftieth among the fifty states and the District
8 of Columbia and in 2012, Louisiana was again fiftieth; and

9 WHEREAS, research of the commission finds that the gender wage gap tends to be
10 narrower in STEM disciplines and the wages are higher than in other fields; and

11 WHEREAS, the commission seeks to further the progress of women in our state by
12 increasing the number of women employed in STEM positions; and

13 WHEREAS, special emphasis has been given to education reform measures
14 implemented in our K-12 curriculum, such as mentoring programs and clubs supporting
15 STEM that specifically encourage young women to pursue STEM disciplines; and

16 WHEREAS, the same special emphasis given to education reform measures to
17 encourage young women into STEM disciplines should necessarily be included in the
18 strategies of Louisiana companies to encourage women to pursue STEM careers, thereby
19 increasing the number of women in STEM positions; and

20 WHEREAS, companies relocating to Louisiana can show their commitment to
21 women in STEM by encouraging the diversity of their current staff and by working with
22 educational systems in Louisiana to promote women in STEM positions; and

23 WHEREAS, the state should continue to encourage Louisiana firms offering STEM-
24 related jobs to make these jobs known to students and graduates through both the Louisiana
25 Connects and Star Jobs computer systems; and

26 WHEREAS, these portals have the potential to be essential two-way communication
27 links between students, graduates, and employers, providing students and graduates with
28 insight into available STEM jobs and the motivation to achieve academically in order to
29 qualify for these careers; and

1 WHEREAS, through a collective effort between the Louisiana Women's Policy and
2 Research Commission, the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, the Office on Women's
3 Policy, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and
4 Louisiana Economic Development, there can be a strong commitment to seeing an increase
5 in the number of women studying and working in STEM disciplines by crafting recruitment
6 strategies highlighting STEM positions as open and available to women.

7 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
8 urge and request the Department of Economic Development to encourage new and existing
9 Louisiana companies to create strategies aimed to increase the number of women employed
10 in STEM positions.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
12 secretary of the Department of Economic Development.

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)]

Smith

HCR No. 136

Urges and requests the Department of Economic Development to encourage new and existing Louisiana companies to create strategies aimed to increase the number of women employed in STEM positions.

Explains the most recent trends in wage disparities between women and men across the nation and in the state of Louisiana.

Explains the meaning of STEM and its economic impact across the nation and our state relative to the wage disparity between women and men.

Encourages companies relocating to Louisiana to show their commitment to women in STEM by encouraging the diversity of their current staff and by working with educational systems in Louisiana to promote women in STEM positions.

Urges the state to continue encouraging Louisiana firms offering STEM-related jobs to make these jobs known to students and graduates through technological portals.

Encourages the Louisiana Legislative Women's Caucus, the Office on Women's Policy, the Louisiana Department of Education, the Louisiana Board of Regents, and Louisiana Economic Development to collectively commit to seeing an increase in the number of women studying and working in STEM disciplines by crafting recruitment strategies highlighting STEM positions as open and available to women.