

Regular Session, 2012

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 78

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To create a study committee to study and make recommendations with respect to student athletes and the detection and prevention of heart disease.

WHEREAS, sudden cardiac arrest is the most common cause of death in the United States, accounting for an estimated three hundred fifty thousand deaths annually or one thousand deaths a day, and it is the leading cause of death in young athletes; and

WHEREAS, sudden cardiac arrest happens to outwardly healthy people with no known heart problems such as high school, college, and professional athletes and thousands of children; and

WHEREAS, sudden cardiac arrest is associated with vigorous exercise which can be seen in many of the high school, college, and professional sports in which young athletes participate; and

WHEREAS, some young athletes are often not diagnosed because they may be outstanding competitors and otherwise appear healthy; and

WHEREAS, many of the afflicted student athletes had hidden, underlying, undiagnosed heart conditions that might have been detected with proper screening; and

WHEREAS, when a student athlete suffers cardiac arrest, his heart abruptly stops pumping blood, typically in response to unexpected, irregular, chaotic heart rhythms, which can be deadly within minutes if not immediately treated; and

WHEREAS, in Louisiana alone there have been numerous student athlete deaths and every life lost is one too many; and

WHEREAS, a young person at the peak of physical prowess, dying without any warning is a shocking, tragic, and potentially preventable death; and

WHEREAS, it is obvious that more needs to be done to prevent sudden cardiac arrest among young athletes; and

WHEREAS, uniform screening methods are needed for students and young people participating in athletics to detect heart defects; and

WHEREAS, many of these tragic deaths could be prevented if we employ early detection methods; such as, the Electrocardiogram (EKG) and Echocardiogram (heart ultrasound); and

WHEREAS, according to the American Heart Association, EKGs are noninvasive, painless, inexpensive tests that use electrodes attached to the chest to record the heart's electrical activity; and

WHEREAS, EKGs are a standard tool that reads the heart's electrical activity to find abnormal rhythms and are designed to identify conditions by determining blood flow and whether areas of the heart are abnormally thick; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the use of early detection testing methods, the American Heart Association recommends a twelve-step history screening process to help prevent sudden cardiac arrest in youth athletes; and

WHEREAS, the screening includes twelve questions about personal and family medical history and a physical examination to uncover aspects of an athlete's health that could signal a cardiovascular problem; and

WHEREAS, heart screening will attempt to identify some preexisting heart conditions that could potentially increase a student's risk of a cardiac event or sudden cardiac death with vigorous physical activity; and

WHEREAS, the complete heart screening process typically includes the following: (1) a focused medical history questionnaire; (2) blood pressure measurements; (3) an EKG; (4) a physician review and examination; and (5) a limited echocardiogram; and

WHEREAS, in certain circumstances after an EKG reading indicates that there are potential heart-related problems the student athlete would be required to take follow-up tests; and

WHEREAS, the combination of history screening and the early detection tests can increase the probability of preventing sudden cardiac arrests in young athletes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby create a study committee, composed of members as hereinafter provided, to study and make

recommendations with respect to the detection and prevention of cardiac arrest in young athletes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study committee created herein shall be composed of five members as follows:

(1) A member of the Louisiana High School Athletics Association appointed by the executive director of such association.

(2) A cardiovascular physician approved by the Louisiana State Board of Medical Examiners and appointed by the executive director of the board.

(3) The secretary of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals or his designee.

(4) A member of the Louisiana Athletics Trainer's Association, Inc., appointed by the president of the association.

(5) A member of the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports appointed by the director of the council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that members of the study committee shall serve without compensation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study committee should study the feasibility of requiring all high school and collegiate athletes to be screened for early detection of heart disease.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the secretary of health and hospitals or his designee shall convene the first meeting of the study committee and shall designate staff of the Department of Health and Hospitals to assist the study committee in performing its duties.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study committee shall meet as necessary and shall report its findings to the legislature not later than February 1, 2013.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE