SLS 14RS-156 **ORIGINAL** 

Regular Session, 2014

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## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 20

BY SENATOR HEITMEIER

HEALTH/HOSPITALS DEPT. Directs Department of Health and Hospitals to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to the federal government that will permit WIC cash value vouchers to be used at farmers' markets.

## A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 2 To direct the Department of Health and Hospitals to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and 3 Children, popularly known as "WIC", to provide for participation of Louisiana 4 5 farmers in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, in which farmers agree to accept vouchers from participants in the WIC program for fresh, nutritious, locally-6 7 grown foods. 8 WHEREAS, the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, hereinafter "FMNP", was established by Congress in 1992 to provide fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and 9 10 vegetables for sale to WIC participants; and 11 WHEREAS, through FMNP, Congress sought to expand the awareness and use of and sales at farmers' markets as these outlets began to expand across the United States; and 12 13 WHEREAS, through the years of the WIC program, Congress has made numerous attempts to ensure that the healthiest options are available for purchase by those eligible to 14 receive WIC benefits; and 15 16 WHEREAS, as large supermarkets with substantial produce departments continue to be unavailable to substantial numbers of those receiving WIC benefits, farmers' markets 17 18 have expanded in many of these areas in order to bring more nutritious options to WIC

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WHEREAS, over the more than twenty years of the FMNP, farmers' markets have expanded in Louisiana and have become more available for many Louisiana citizens, providing both a source of fresh nutritious foods and a market for the farmers of these more nutritious products; and

WHEREAS, as of 2012, more than twenty states were offering the option of spending WIC vouchers at farmers' markets operating within those states; and

WHEREAS, direct marketing of farm products through farmers' markets continues to be an important sales outlet for agricultural producers nationwide and Louisiana continues to expand access to farmers' markets throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, expanding WIC to farmers who participate in local farmers' markets takes advantage of this integral part of the urban/farm linkage; and

WHEREAS, while these markets have continued to grow in popularity primarily due to the growing consumer interest in obtaining fresh products directly from the farm, it follows logically that WIC participants would have the same interest in the availability of fresh food products direct from the farm.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby direct the Department of Health and Hospitals to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children to provide for participation of Louisiana farmers in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, in which farmers agree to accept vouchers from participants in the WIC program for fresh, nutritious, locally-grown foods.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Health and Hospitals.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

## DIGEST

Heitmeier SCR No. 20

Directs DHH to submit a Medicaid state plan amendment to the WIC program, to provide for participation of Louisiana farmers in the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, in which farmers agree to accept vouchers from participants in the WIC program for fresh, nutritious, locally-grown foods.