

House Committee on Education

Minutes of Meeting
2021 Regular Session
May 4, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Mark Wright, vice chairman of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:06 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Kendrick "Ken" Brass
Representative Rick Edmonds
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Barbara Reich Freiberg
Representative Stephanie Hilferty
Representative Patrick O. Jefferson
Representative Charles Anthony Owen
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Vincent "Vinney" J. St. Blanc III
Representative Phillip Eric Tarver
Representative Mark Wright, vice chairman

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Representative Raymond E. Garofalo, Jr., chairman
Representative Gary M. Carter, Jr.

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth L. Borne, legislative analyst
Lisa Lovello, legislative analyst
Jacqueline Snowden, committee administrative assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms

III. DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION

House Bill No. 280 by Representative Edmonds

Representative Edmonds presented House Bill No. 280, which provides relative to program administration and school eligibility for Student Scholarships for the Educational Excellence Program.

Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt a three-minute rule for discussion on legislation during the committee meeting. Without objection, a three-minute rule for discussion on legislation was adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Kelli Bottger, American Federation for Children, 37397 Cypress Alley Avenue, Gonzales, LA 70737, (225) 936-9800, spoke in support of House Bill No. 280.

Representative Wright offered a technical amendment to House Bill No. 280. Representative Wright offered a motion to adopt the proposed technical amendment. Without objection, the amendment was adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Representative Edmonds offered amendments to House Bill No. 280 that, relative to site visits, require the Louisiana Department of Education to visit schools that fail to meet minimum standards for academic performance or that are otherwise not in good standing instead of schools about which concerns have been raised regarding academic welfare, health, or safety. Representative Edmonds offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Dr. Cade Brumley, state superintendent of education, state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), Claiborne Building, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 280.

Representative Freeman offered a motion to report House Bill No. 280 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 280 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 7 in support and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 494 by Representative Mincey

Representative Mincey presented House Bill No. 494, which provides relative to public school choice.

Representative Wright offered a motion to adopt a substitute bill to House Bill No. 494. Without objection, the motion to adopt a substitute bill to House Bill No. 494 passed by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Steve Parrill, Livingston Parish public schools, 1301 South Elm, Hammond, LA 70403, (985) 974-1134, spoke in support of House Bill No. 494.

Bryan Wax, Livingston Parish public schools, 13909 Florida Boulevard, Livingston, LA (225) 686-4210, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 494.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke in support of House Bill No. 494.

Dannie Garrett, Louisiana School Boards Association, 635 Main Street, #3, Baton Rouge, LA 70801, (225) 382-0333, spoke in support of House Bill No. 494.

Ethan Melancon, State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (985) 859-4649, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 494.

Lauren Gleason, Louisiana Association of Business and Industry, 500 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 928-5388, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 494.

Kelli Bottger, American Federation for Children, 37397 Cypress Alley Avenue, Gonzales, LA 70737, (225) 936-9800, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 494.

Representative Wright offered a motion to voluntarily defer action on the substitute bill for House Bill No. 494. Without objection, action on the substitute bill for House Bill No. 494 was voluntarily deferred by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 1 in support and 11 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 130 by Representative Robby Carter

Representative Robby Carter presented House Bill No. 130, which provides relative to occupant restraint systems on school buses.

Representative Jefferson offered amendments to House Bill No. 130 that would remove a deadline for implementation and make present law applicable only to new buses placed in service after January 1, 2023. Representative Jefferson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Edmonds, Freeman, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, and Tarver voted yea.

Mary-Patricia Wray, Louisiana School Bus Operators Association, 2360 Tulip Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 130.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 130 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 130 was reported with amendments by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, Phelps, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, 1 in opposition, and 2 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 312 by Representative Freiberg

Representative Freiberg presented House Bill No. 312, which provides relative to criminal history review with respect to teacher certification.

Representative Freiberg offered amendments to House Bill No. 312 that would:

1. Authorize the state Department of Education (DOE) to collect fees charged for fingerprinting.
2. Require DOE to timely submit fees to appropriate entities.
3. Specify that the criminal history background check process for those seeking to renew, advance, or otherwise modify certification shall be the same as the process for applicants for new certification.
4. Prohibits the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education from renewing, advancing, or otherwise modifying the certification of anyone who has been convicted of or pled nolo contendere to certain crimes.

5. Add a requirement that FBI records also be checked.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Denise Brou, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 953-3772, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 312.

Dr. Keith Leger, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (337) 540-9441, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 312.

Sarah Whittington, Justice and Accountability Center of Louisiana, 7035 Washington Avenue, Suite 203, New Orleans, LA 70125, (504) 322-4050, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 312.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Bill No. 312 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 312 was reported with amendments by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 3 in support, 17 in opposition, and 3 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 304 by Representative Lyons

Representative Lyons presented House Bill No. 304, which provides for coordinating data in order to evaluate the early childhood care and education network, prioritizing the provision of related services and funds, and creating a program to provide instructional materials for home use.

Edgar Cage, Together Louisiana, 2019 Government Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 274-5808, spoke in support of House Bill No. 304.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 304 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 304 was reported favorably by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Amedee, Brass, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, Tarver, and Wright voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 8 in support. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 542 by Representative Amedee

Representative Amedee presented House Bill No. 542, which provides for the Fairness in Women's Sports Act relative to a school's ability to offer opportunities to each student to participate in team sporting events on an equal basis.

Claston Bernard, P. O. Box 2201, Gonzales, LA 70707, (225) 454-7184, spoke in support of House Bill No. 542.

Jennifer Marusak, P. O. Box 66412, Baton Rouge, LA 70806, (225) 572-1916, spoke in support of House Bill No. 542.

Dr. Will Hall, Louisiana Baptist Office of Public Policy, 1250 MacArthur Drive, Alexandria, LA 71309, (318) 449-4348, spoke in support of House Bill No. 542.

Devon Dorenzo, 2214 Amelia Street, New Orleans, LA, (504) 475-3816, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 542.

Dr., Nithya Ravindran, 1440 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA 70112, (248) 982-1011, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 542.

Tabitha Ricks, REJAC Collective, 1226 South Broad Street, New Orleans, LA 70119, (504) 994-8424, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 542.

Teyannah Tokeon, Breakout, 4327 Canal Street, New Orleans, LA, (504) 326-8016, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 542.

Rev. Tommy Dillon, Inclusive Louisiana, Episcopal Diocese of Louisiana, 601 Spain Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 933-3288, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 542.

Representative Tarver offered a motion to report House Bill No. 542 favorably, to which Representative Freeman objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and the motion failed to pass by a vote of 5 yeas, 6 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Amedee, Edmonds, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea. Representatives Brass, Freeman, Freiberg, Hilferty, Jefferson, and Phelps voted nay. Representative Wright abstained.

Witness cards submitted by individuals who did not speak are as follows: 15 in support and 68 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

V. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vice Chairman Mark Wright announced that House Concurrent Resolution No. 49, which requests that the state board of Elementary and Secondary Education collect, analyze, and report data relative to certain high and low performing schools, was voluntarily deferred by the author.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

House Committee on Education

Date adopted:

The committee has acknowledged on _____, 2022, that these minutes were prepared in accordance with the rules of the House of Representatives.