

House Committee on Education

Minutes of Meeting
2023 Regular Session
May 2, 2023

I. CALL TO ORDER

Representative Lance Harris, chairman of the House Committee on Education, called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. in Room 1, in the state capitol in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

II. ROLL CALL

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Representative Lance Harris, chairman
Representative Beryl A. Amedée
Representative Kendrick "Ken" Brass
Representative Julie Emerson
Representative Aimee Adatto Freeman
Representative Barbara Reich Freiberg
Representative Brett F. Geymann
Representative Patrick O. Jefferson, vice chairman
Representative Charles Anthony Owen
Representative Tammy T. Phelps
Representative Vincent "Vinney" J. St. Blanc, III
Representative Phillip Eric Tarver

MEMBERS ABSENT:

None

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Elizabeth L. Borne, legislative analyst
Lisa Lovello, legislative analyst
Alexandra Cravins, committee administrative assistant
Sarah Baker, committee assistant

ADDITIONAL ATTENDEES PRESENT:

Myrtis Jarrell, sergeant at arms
Frank Meyer, IV, clerk

III. BUSINESS

Chairman Harris announced that the committee would observe a three-minute rule for presenters and speakers on ensuing instruments.

House Bill No. 103 by Representative Muscarello

Representative Muscarello presented House Bill No. 103, which adds Financial Literacy as a required course for high school students.

Representative Harris offered technical amendments to House Bill No. 103. Representative Harris offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Jessica Sharon, Louisiana Jumpstart and Louisiana Credit Union League, 10478 Starlight Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70815, (225) 772-3021, spoke in support of House Bill No. 103.

Ethan Melancon, Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 103.

Cade Brumley, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North 3rd Street, Baton Rouge, LA, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 103.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 103.

John Schroder, State Treasurer, Louisiana Treasury, 900 North Third Street, Third Floor, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 103.

Representative Tarver offered a motion to report House Bill No. 103 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 103 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 10 in support, and 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 348 by Representative Jenkins

Representative Jenkins presented House Bill No. 348, which provides relative to school safety.

Representative Jefferson offered amendments that:

1. Required certain personnel to make reasonable efforts to attempt to take certain actions in the event of a threat of violence or terrorism rather than requiring them to take the actions immediately.
2. Added that school administrators may deny certain individuals the right to visit the school.
3. Added a limitation of liability relative to carrying out proposed law.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Larry Samuel, Louisiana Federation of Teachers, 1539 Jackson Avenue, Suite 115, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 715-0484, spoke in support of House Bill No. 348.

Marcus Thomas, Louisiana Association of Educators, 8322 One Calais Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (337) 380-0927, spoke in support of House Bill No. 348.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 348.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Bill No. 348 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 348 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

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

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 378 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 21 by Representative Stagni

Representative Stagni presented House Bill No. 21, which provides relative to extended leave for school bus operators and public school employees.

Representative Jefferson offered amendments that stipulated that school employees may take extended sick leave only if school board policy authorizes such leave. Representative Jefferson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Cynthia Posey, Louisiana Federation of Teachers, 9623 Brookline Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, spoke in support of House Bill No. 21.

Marcus Thomas, Louisiana Association of Educators, 8322 One Calais Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (337) 380-0927, spoke in support of House Bill No. 21.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 21 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 21 was reported with amendments by a vote of 12 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 379 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 412 by Representative White

Representative White presented House Bill No. 412, which establishes a program to be administered by the Louisiana Educational Television Authority (LETA) for the purpose of encouraging reading for young children and creates a fund within the state treasury for the purpose of funding the program.

Representative Harris offered amendments that:

1. Made LETA's proposed law responsibilities subject to the appropriation of funds.
2. Authorized LETA to work collaboratively with a book-providing organization rather than Friends of Louisiana Public Broadcasting to implement the program.
3. Added that in addition to monies appropriated by the legislature, monies designated to the fund through donation, gift, grant, or any other revenue shall be deposited into the fund.
4. Changed the name of the program and fund.

Representative Harris offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, and Tarver voted yea.

Nora Briggs, The Dollywood Foundation, 111 East Main Street, Sevierville, Tennessee, (865) 868-1353, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 412 and provided a handout, "Dolly Parton Imagination Library Books", Exhibit A, which is included in the committee records.

Representative Amedée offered a motion to report House Bill No. 412 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 412 was reported with amendments by a vote of 11 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

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

House Bill No. 258 by Representative Wright

Representative Wright presented House Bill No. 258, which establishes a state maritime academy within the University of Louisiana System.

Representative Harris offered amendments that added that establishment of a maritime academy is subject to the constitutional powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board of Regents. Representative Harris offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Jim Henderson, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (318) 426-7104, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 258.

Representative Brass offered a motion to report House Bill No. 258 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 258 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 4 in support, and 1 for information only. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 282 by Representative Green

Representative Green presented House Bill No. 282, which requires free school breakfast and lunch for certain students.

Representative Harris offered amendments that limited applicability of proposed law to students who qualify for reduced-price school meals and required reimbursement by the state Department of Education.

Representative Harris offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Charles Owen, and St. Blanc voted yea.

Ethan Melancon, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 282.

Stephanie Coup, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (225) 491-7026, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 282.

Representative Jefferson offered a motion to report House Bill No. 282 with amendments. Without objection, House Bill No. 282 was reported with amendments by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 18 in support, and 1 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 205 by Representative Bryant

Representative Bryant presented House Bill No. 205, which requires additional compensation for teachers and other school employees under certain circumstances.

Marcus Thomas, Louisiana Association of Educators, 8322 One Calais Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70809, (337) 380-0927, spoke in support of House Bill No. 205.

Larry Samuel, Louisiana Federation of Teachers, 1539 Jackson Avenue, Suite 115, New Orleans, LA 70130, (504) 715-0484, spoke in support of House Bill No. 205.

Dr. Keith Courville, Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana, 7907 Wrenwood Boulevard, Suite 15, (225) 769-4005, spoke in support of House Bill No. 205.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 205.

Representative Harris offered a motion to report House Bill No. 205 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 205 was reported favorably by a vote of 8 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 8 in support, and in 6 opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 378 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 289 by Representative Ivey

Representative Ivey presented House Bill No. 289, which provides relative to organ donation instruction in public high schools.

Representative Harris offered amendments that removed the requirements that instruction be a minimum of 30 minutes per year. Representative Harris offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 9 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Leah B. Veck, 12432 Stoneway, Baton Rouge, LA 70818, (225) 993-1504, spoke in support of House Bill No. 289 and provided statements in support of House Bill No. 289, labeled Exhibit B, which is included in the committee records.

Kelly Ranum, Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency, 68190 Highway 190 Service Road, Covington, LA 70443, (504) 839-3355, spoke in support of House Bill No. 289 and provided a handout, "LOPA Organ Donation Information Packet", Exhibit C, which is included in the committee records.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 289.

Caroline Roemer, Louisiana Association of Public Charter Schools, no address provided, Metairie, LA, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 289.

Fiorella Trapani, Health Freedom Louisiana, 3301 17th Street, Metairie, LA 70010, (504) 957-7523, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 289.

Representative Harris offered a motion to report House Bill No. 289 with amendments, to which Representative Charles Owen objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 289 was reported with amendments by a vote of 7 yeas, 1 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea. Representative Charles Owen voted nay. Representative Harris abstained.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 5 in support, and 4 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 1 in support. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 12 by Representative Nelson

Vice Chairman Jefferson in the chair.

Representative Nelson presented House Bill No. 12, which prohibits promotion to the fourth grade of certain students whose reading deficiencies have not been remedied by the end of the third grade.

Representative Jefferson offered amendments that changed the timeline for provision of intensive instructional services from prior to retention in third grade to the student's repeated third grade school year. Representative Jefferson offered a motion to adopt the proposed amendments. Without objection, the amendments were adopted by a vote of 7 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, and Tarver voted yea.

Ashley Nelson, 819 Tete Lours Drive, Mandeville, LA 70471, (985) 246-0011, spoke in support of House Bill No. 12.

Ethan Melancon, Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 12.

Jenna Chiasson, Louisiana Department of Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (225) 427-2056, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 12.

Chairman Harris in the chair.

Belinda Davis, 4540 Hyacinth Avenue, Baton Rouge, LA 70808, (225) 202-2698, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Michael Faulk, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, 2713 Indian Mound Boulevard, Monroe, LA 71201, (225) 229-6021, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Andrea George, 2636 Lloyd Road, Maurice, LA 70555, (337) 356-1727, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Corhonda Corley, 8815 Wilmore Drive, Zachary, LA 70791, (225) 654-0671, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 12.

Representative Tarver offered a motion to report House Bill No. 12 with amendments, to which Representative Phelps objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 12 was reported with amendments by a vote of 7 yeas and 3 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Emerson, Freiberg, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea. Representatives Jefferson, Brass, and Phelps voted nay.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 25 in support, and 10 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 6 in support, and 1 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 326 by Representative Nelson

Representative Nelson presented House Bill No. 326, which requires foundational numeracy skills standards as a component of teacher education programs.

Dr. Keith Courville, Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana, 7907 Wrenwood Boulevard, Suite 15, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 769-4005, spoke in support of House Bill No. 326.

Representative Freiberg offered a motion to report House Bill No. 326 favorably. Without objection, House Bill No. 326 was reported favorably by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Brass, Emerson, Freiberg, Jefferson, Charles Owen, Phelps, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

Witness cards submitted by those 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. 399 by Representative Edmonston

Representative Edmonston presented House Bill No. 399, which requires that communications issued about immunization requirements include exemption information and applies exemptions not only to students seeking to enter school but also to students attending school.

Jill Hines, Health Freedom Louisiana, 1307 Mesa Avenue, Ruston, LA 71270, (904) 318-6018, spoke in support of House Bill No. 399 and provided a handout, "Correspondences Relative to Vaccine Policies in Various Louisiana Schools", Exhibit D, which is included in the committee records.

Elizabeth Wahl André, 3595 Wahl Road, Paulina, LA 70763, (225) 869-1286, spoke in support of House Bill No. 399.

Fiorella Trapani, Health Freedom Louisiana, 3301 17th Street, Metairie, LA 70010, (504) 957-7523, spoke in support of House Bill No. 399.

Shari Champagne, You B The Change, 5734 West Main Street, Houma, LA 70364, (985) 713-4601, spoke in support of House Bill No. 399.

Ethan Melancon, Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1201 North Third Street, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, spoke in support of House Bill No. 399.

Crystal Rommen, Louisiana Families for Vaccines, 2252 Tower Drive, Suite 108, Monroe, LA 71201, (253) 682-9442, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 399.

Jim Henderson, University of Louisiana System, 1201 North Third Street, Suite 7-300, Baton Rouge, LA 70802, (318) 426-7104, spoke for information only on House Bill No. 399.

Representative Amedée offered a motion to report House Bill No. 399 favorably, to which Representative Jefferson objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 399 was reported favorably by a vote of 7 yeas, 3 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Amedée, Emerson, Freiberg, Geymann, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea. Representatives Brass, Freeman, and Jefferson voted nay. Representative Harris abstained.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 45 in support, and 9 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 355 in support, and 3 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

House Bill No. 182 by Representative Edmonston

Representative Edmonston presented House Bill No. 182, which provides that no person shall be required to receive a COVID-19 vaccine as a condition of enrollment or attendance at any public or nonpublic school.

Jill Hines, Health Freedom Louisiana, 1307 Mesa Avenue, Ruston, LA 71270, (904) 518-6018, spoke in support of House Bill No. 182.

Fiorella Trapani, Health Freedom Louisiana, 3301 17th Street, Metairie, LA 70010, (504) 957-7523, spoke in support of House Bill No. 182.

Andrea George, 2636 Lloyd Road, Maurice, LA 70555, (337) 356-1727, spoke in support of House Bill No. 182.

Mary Beth Hughes, Louisiana Association of Business & Industry, 500 Main Street, Baton Rouge, LA, (225) 270-5255, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 182.

Crystal Rommen, Louisiana Families for Vaccines, 2252 Tower Drive, Suite 108, Monroe, LA 71201, (253) 682-9442, spoke in opposition to House Bill No. 182.

Representative Amedée offered a motion to report House Bill No. 182 favorably, to which Representative Jefferson objected. The administrative assistant called the roll, and House Bill No. 182 was reported favorably by a vote of 6 yeas, 3 nays, and 1 abstention. Representatives Amedée, Emerson, Geymann, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea. Representatives Freeman, Freiberg, and Jefferson voted nay. Representative Harris abstained.

Witness cards submitted by those who did not speak are as follows: 47 in support, and 5 in opposition. Witness cards are included in the committee records.

Statements submitted in accordance with House Rule 14.33 in lieu of appearing before the committee are as follows: 401 in support, and 1 in opposition. Copies of these statements are included in the committee records.

IV. ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Representative Emerson offered a motion to adjourn. Without objection, the motion passed by a vote of 10 yeas and 0 nays. Representatives Harris, Amedée, Emerson, Freeman, Freiberg, Geymann, Jefferson, Charles Owen, St. Blanc, and Tarver voted yea.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman Lance Harris
House Committee on Education

Date adopted: