

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 97

BY REPRESENTATIVE SMITH

A RESOLUTION

To urge and request schools and school governing authorities to encourage students to learn American Sign Language.

WHEREAS, American Sign Language (ASL) serves as a vital language of deaf people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, offering ASL as a foreign language credit in schools across the state of Louisiana would introduce students to communicative proficiency skills in ASL; school administrators, faculty, and staff should encourage students to consider ASL coursework and clubs where they can learn frequently used signs and cultural aspects of the deaf community; and

WHEREAS, sign language interpreters bridge the communication gap between deaf and hard of hearing and hearing people; there is an extreme shortage of interpreters in Louisiana and students in Louisiana schools should be encouraged to become sign language interpreters; and

WHEREAS, deaf and hard of hearing students are empowered by having full visual and tactile access to language; learning ASL boosts cognition for hearing students and helps individuals become better communicators and listeners; and

WHEREAS, students who invest in learning a language in school benefit in many ways, including increased confidence, empathy, a sense of personal achievement, thoughtfulness, improved prospects for college admission, and a competitive edge in the job market; and

WHEREAS, increasing the Louisiana population that is fluent in ASL would bridge gaps between the deaf and hard of hearing and hearing populations throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, ASL clubs in schools would provide an opportunity for deaf and hard of hearing students to practice their sign language, learn and improve ASL grammar, and expand their vocabulary and could offer a wide variety of activities to teach members about vocabulary, fluency, and deaf history and culture; and

WHEREAS, ASL clubs would present the opportunity for deaf or hard of hearing students to have meaningful conversations with hearing students about their experiences and provide a space for students to find common ground with and increase understanding of each other.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request schools and school governing authorities to encourage students to learn American Sign Language, to offer foreign language courses and credit in American Sign Language, and to form and encourage membership in American Sign Language clubs.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES