

2024 Regular Session

SENATE BILL NO. 123

BY SENATOR ABRAHAM

SCHOOLS. Provides relative to the employment or acceptance of volunteer chaplains in public schools. (gov sig)

1 AN ACT

2 To enact Chapter 19-A of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, to be

3 comprised of R.S. 17:3011 through 3014, relative to school chaplains; to provide for

4 the employment or acceptance as a volunteer of a chaplain by public school boards;

5 to provide for support, services, and programs for students; to provide for

6 responsibility and hiring requirements; to provide for prohibiting certain hires as

7 chaplains; to provide for limitation of liability; and to provide for related matters.

8 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

9 Section 1. Chapter 19-A of Title 17 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950,

10 comprised of R.S. 17:3011 through 3014, is hereby enacted to read as follows:

11 **CHAPTER 19-A. SCHOOL CHAPLAINS**

12 **§3011. School chaplains; employment; volunteer**

13 **Each city, parish, or other local public school board may employ or**

14 **accept as a volunteer a chaplain to provide support, services, and programs for**

15 **students as assigned by a school board pursuant to the provisions of this**

16 **Chapter.**

17 **§3012. Selection; responsibility; certification**

1 **A. The school chaplain shall be selected by and be responsible to the local**
2 **school officials in each city, parish, or other local public school system.**

3 **B. Any school chaplain employed or accepted as a volunteer pursuant to**
4 **the provisions of this Section is not required to be certified by the State Board**
5 **of Elementary and Secondary Education.**

6 **C. Nothing in this Section shall prohibit any school board from**
7 **employing or accepting as a volunteer more than one chaplain.**

8 **§3013. Hiring requirements; prohibited hires**

9 **A. A city, parish, or other local public school board that employs or**
10 **accepts as a volunteer, a chaplain, under this Chapter, shall ensure that the**
11 **chaplain submits to a fingerprint based state and federal background check, as**
12 **provided in R.S. 15:587.1, before the chaplain begins employment or**
13 **volunteering at a school.**

14 **B. A city, parish, or other local public school board shall not employ or**
15 **accept as a volunteer a chaplain who has registered or is required to register as**
16 **a sex offender or child predator in accordance with R.S. 15:542 et seq.**

17 **§3014. Limitation of liability; school chaplain**

18 **A. No person shall have a cause of action against a chaplain for any**
19 **action taken or statement made in adherence with the provisions for service,**
20 **support, and programs for students.**

21 **B. The immunity from liability provided for in Subsection A of this**
22 **Section, shall not apply to any action or statement by such chaplain, if such**
23 **action or statement was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause**
24 **harm to harass or intimidate those seeking support, services and programs.**

25 Section 2. This Act shall become effective upon signature by the governor or, if not
26 signed by the governor, upon expiration of the time for bills to become law without signature
27 by the governor, as provided by Article III, Section 18 of the Constitution of Louisiana. If
28 vetoed by the governor and subsequently approved by the legislature, this Act shall become
29 effective on the day following such approval.

The original instrument was prepared by Michael Bell. The following digest, which does not constitute a part of the legislative instrument, was prepared by Carla S. Roberts.

DIGEST

SB 123 Engrossed

2024 Regular Session

Abraham

Proposed law allows each city, parish, or other local public school board may employ or accept as a volunteer a chaplain to provide support, services, and programs for students as assigned by a school board pursuant to proposed law.

Proposed law provides that a school chaplain employed or accepted as a volunteer is not required to be certified by BESE.

Proposed law requires that each chaplain consent to a fingerprint based state and federal criminal background check and prohibits the hiring of a chaplain who is a registered sex offender or child predator.

Proposed law limits the liability of chaplains for any action taken or statement made in adherence with the provisions for service, support, and programs for students. Furthermore, proposed law denies immunity from liability to any action or statement by chaplains, if the action or statement was maliciously, willfully, and deliberately intended to cause harm to harass or intimidate those seeking support, services and programs.

Effective upon signature of the governor or lapse of time for gubernatorial action.

(Adds R.S. 17:3011-3014)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Education to the original bill

1. Requires each chaplain to consent to a fingerprint based state and federal criminal background check.