



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brenda Hodge
LA Senate
Phone: (225) 342-9737

Sheila McCant
LA House of Representatives
(225) 342-9795

DATE: August 25, 2000

STATE LEGISLATORS HEADED TO THE CLASSROOM LAWMAKERS MAKE PLANS TO PARTICIPATE IN NATIONAL BACK TO SCHOOL DAY

As summer ends and school children around the state head back to the classroom, Louisiana's state legislators make plans to join them.

On Friday, September 15, Louisiana lawmakers will join their counterparts around the country for the first national America's Legislators Back to School Day. The program is a bipartisan event designed to teach young people - the nation's future voters and leaders-what it's like to be a state legislator: the processes, the pressures, and the debate, negotiation and compromise that are the very fabric of representative democracy.

As Senate Education Committee Chairman Jerry Theunissen, who authored a resolution earlier this year declaring the third Friday in September "Legislators Back to School Day", explained, "This is a great opportunity not only for students and teachers to gain a better understanding of the state legislature and what it means to serve in a representative democracy, but also for lawmakers to gain a better understanding of what is happening in Louisiana's classrooms."

(MORE)

add one-Back to School

This week, after hearing an explanation of the America's Back to School Day project from Senator Theunissen, BESE President Glenny Lee Buquet stressed the importance of this "tremendous civics lesson." Members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) then unanimously voted to endorse support and commit to the America's Legislators Back to School Day program.

The program is a product of the National Conference of State Legislatures' (NCSL) recently launched civic education initiative, the Trust for Representative Democracy. Based on the ideas and fundamental principles set forth by the framers of the Constitution, the Trust is designed to engage young people and build their understanding and support for America's democratic institutions.

A pilot project in six states last year, it reached more than 4,000 students. Its success prompted NCSL to roll out the program to all 50 states this year.

Other organizations that are working in a cooperative effort with Louisiana state legislators on the Back to School project are the Louisiana School Boards Association, Louisiana Association of School Superintendents, Louisiana Association of Principals, Louisiana Association of Educators, Louisiana Federation of Teachers and the Associated Professional Educators of Louisiana.

At this time, over 60 Louisiana legislators have signed up to participate in the program by visiting classes in their districts on or around September 15.

##