



LOUISIANA SENATE

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CONTACT: SHERRI BREAUX

PHONE: 225.342.6145

LEGISLATORS TAKE "REAL LIFE" CIVICS LESSON TO FARMERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

State Senator Mike Walsworth (R-West Monroe) and Representative Robert Shadoin (R-Ruston) put a face on "civics" during a recent visit with students at Glenbrook School. As part of the America's Legislators Back to School program, the legislators engaged students in a first hand look at what it is like to be a Louisiana state legislator, what representative democracy is about and why it is important for students to be knowledgeable and involved in their government. The program gives legislators the opportunity to meet with their young constituents and to answer questions, share ideas, listen to concerns and impart a greater understanding of the legislative processes necessary for developing effective public policy and engaging citizens.

I look forward to visiting with students as part of the Legislators Back to School Program each year," Sen. Walsworth said. "It is a win, win situation for legislators who get a chance to learn more about what is on the minds of teachers and students. And, it is a win, win for the students who get to know more about representative democracy first hand from their elected representatives. It is civics in education, not just in a textbook."

Commenting on his visit to Farmerville, Representative Shadoin said, "I enjoyed visiting the students at Farmerville High School. Educating our youth is vital; these students are our future voters, citizens and law makers, and investing time in their education is the best way we can help them achieve their goals and better our state as a whole."

Bethany Rhodes, member of the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) group and also a student at Farmerville High School, contacted the legislators and invited them to visit the school and speak to the students about democracy and a student's role in responsible citizenship. LYAC is a youth council consisting of twenty-one students from across the state who act as a youth voice and represent the perspectives of teens to their legislators and other public officials.

Noting the importance of the legislative school visit, Bethany said, "As a student, we learn all about government and legislation. I believe it is so important for students to realize that

government affects their everyday world. I believe that if we teach people to be informed when they are young it will become a wonderful habit that will carry into their adulthood. Senator Walsworth and Representative Shadoin did an amazing job of explaining that."

The America's Legislators Back to School program is a product of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) civic education initiative, the Trust for Representative Democracy. Legislators in Louisiana have consistently had one of the highest participation rates in the nation by going back to school.

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