

SENATOR'S NEWS RELEASE

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2010-2011 LEGISLATIVE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL TO HOLD FIRST PUBLIC HEARING

OPPORTUNITY TO IMPACT STATE POLICY AFFECTING LOUISIANA'S YOUTH

Some of Louisiana's most outstanding students will take their place as members of the Louisiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council and work together over the next year in an effort to influence the legislative process and make the state a better place for young people. The council is a yearly-appointed body composed entirely of students that addresses issues affecting the youth of Louisiana and is overseen by the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education.

State lawmakers created the Legislative Youth Advisory Council and enacted it into law during the 2007 Regular Session. Now in its third year, its purpose is to facilitate the communication between youth and the legislature and to give students a unique opportunity to be involved in the workings of state government. The youth council will have the opportunity to study and address issues that are important to young people, including education, employment, youth health, physical fitness, strategies to increase youth participation in local and state government, underage drinking, litter and environmental control, youth access to state and local services, and various other issues.

"This is an opportunity for these civic-minded young people from across the state to come together and grow as citizens and future leaders," said Dale Bayard, Chairman of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education and a member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE).

"I am thrilled that these young people are interested in their government," adds Beth Courtney, Vice-Chair of the Louisiana Commission on Civic Education and Executive Director of Louisiana Public Broadcasting. "I am really looking forward to hearing their thoughts and ideas."

The Legislative Youth Advisory Council will hold a leadership seminar for members on June 14, supported by the La. City Attorneys Association, which will feature speakers including Lieutenant Governor Scott Angelle, State Superintendent of Education Paul Pastorek, Senator Eric LaFleur (D-Ville Platte), Senator Ben Nevers (D-Bogalusa), chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, Representative Rosalind Jones (D-Monroe), First Assistant Secretary of State Tom Schedler, and Eric Wowoh, president of the non-profit organization Change Agent Network, Inc. and native of Liberia, Africa.

The 2010-2011 Legislative Youth Advisory Council holds its first public hearing and orientation at 1:00 PM in House Committee Room 1 at the State Capitol on Tuesday, June 15th, which will also include such discussion topics as bullying and harassment, including cyberbullying, and engaging teens in local government. The hearing will also involve a debate of issues by members, an orientation of council initiatives led by the youth council senior advisors, and a segment on engaging teens in local government led by Tom Ed McHugh of the Louisiana Municipal Association and John Gallagher of the La. City Attorneys Association.

Major initiatives and activities of the council include the Louisiana Lighten Up Louisiana-Youth Program (www.lightenuplouisiana.org) in partnership with the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports, participation on the Louisiana Public Broadcasting program, Louisiana Public Square, and World Peace Day activities, held each fall in partnership with the Louisiana World Peace Day Committee.

Members of the council are selected from a wide pool of applicants from around the state who display a strong interest in civic involvement. Two student members serve from each of the seven congressional districts (14 members) and seven (7) additional youth members are designated by and represent a school-sponsored or community service club or organization which has a civic mission. The members must be between the age of 14 and 19 and enrolled in a public or private high school or are participating in a home study program or in a BESE-approved GED skills program.

Newly appointed members of the Legislative Youth Advisory Council are: Kaity Addison, Holden High School, Holden; Melanie Benit (St. Bernard Advisory Council Designee), Chalmette High School, Meraux; Blake Corley, Episcopal School of Acadiana, Crowley; Lindsey Fryoux (4-H Club Designee), East Ascension High School, Gonzales; Allison Gerard, Carencro High School, Opelousas; Bradley Guin (SADD Designee), Haughton High School, Haughton; Michael Labat (Student Council Designee), Thibodaux High School, Thibodaux; Matthew LaBorde, Bolton High School, Alexandria; Alyssa Leader, West Monroe High School, West Monroe; Javen Little, Grand Lake High School, Lake Charles; Mallory Martin, South Terrebonne High School, Chauvin; Hannah

Matherne, home school, French Settlement; Jessica McCarthy, Mount Carmel Academy, Destrehan; Sarah Bracy Penn, C.E. Byrd High School, Shreveport; Ashlyn Pinkins, Thomas Jefferson High School, Gretna; Austin Rollins (Interact Rotary Designee), Dutchtown High School, Gonzales; Elliot Terral (Boy Scouts Designee), West Monroe High School, West Monroe; Dennis Tran, Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy, Marrero; Hunter Waddell, Captain Shreve High School, Shreveport; and Hamilton Winters (Character Counts Designee), West Monroe High School, West Monroe.

Senior Advisors to the council include former council members Caitlin Ballotta, Prairieville; Michael Bell, Hahnville; Ashley Bruce, Many; David Holmes, Baton Rouge; Alex LeBlanc, Abbeville; Davante Lewis, Lake Charles; and Landon Webber, Baton Rouge.

For additional information, citizens can call the Senate Communications Office at 225.342.9737.

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