



# LOUISIANA SENATE

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CONTACT: SEN. THOMPSON

PHONE: 318.878.9408

## **SENATOR THOMPSON DISCUSSES WORK OF 2014 REGULAR SESSION**

### **NOTES SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO PROMOTE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECT EDUCATION**

District 34 State Senator Francis Thompson (D-Delhi) is generally pleased with the work of the recently concluded 2014 Regular Session. Among the highlights is the adoption of a balanced state-operating budget that increases funding for public school and supports workforce development efforts.

“The daunting budget shortfalls we faced again this year did not deter our efforts to ensure that vital services are provided to our citizens,” said Sen. Thompson. “I believe that we were able to adopt a responsible and fair state operating budget that increases funding for public schools and supports special funding for workforce development initiatives at colleges and universities across the state. These initiatives will prepare our citizens to take advantage of an expected economic boom across the state over the next several years and highly-skilled, high-paying that will result.”

Sen. Thompson notes that in addition to education and workforce development, one of his top priorities this session was to ensure that the state’s most vulnerable citizens have adequate services in the changing landscape of public healthcare.

“Healthcare is a critical issue facing Louisiana. I have and will continue to fight to ensure that we get the redesign of public health care right. The wellbeing of our most vulnerable citizens – the elderly, the young and the underinsured – is depending on it,” said Sen. Thompson.

Also of import this session was the legislature’s support of many measures that Sen. Thompson authored including:

- SB 129, now Act 1, authorizes the state Department of Public Safety and Corrections to inspect explosives facilities and requires such facilities to have a valid permit from the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), in addition to a state license. Sen. Thompson filed SB 129 in response to a massive blast at Camp Minden in Webster Parish in October 2012.
- SB 351, now Act 139, makes changes to the state burn injury-reporting law.

- SB 388, now Act 140, extends the amount of time that convicted arsonists are required to be registered with the state from five to ten years and creates the crime of “injury by arson.
- SB 241, now Act 293, authorizes the Commissioner of Financial Institutions to require submission of specific consumer loan data on an annual basis from the consumer credit licenses to the agency. The data will be used to collect loan-related data from the industry, as well as serve as a tool for determining a risk-focused approach to examination scheduling.
- SB 119, now Act 110, requires owners or lessees of farms or preserves engaged in owning, raising, selling or harvesting imported exotic deer and antelope, elk, farm-raised white tail deer and other exotic deer, for any purpose, to apply to the commissioner for a license. The purpose of this legislation is to protect Louisiana’s native wildlife, domestic livestock and the public from diseases that may be spread by farmed alternative livestock.
- SCR 124 establishes the Agriculture Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Study Group to study the use and application of drones for agricultural purposes.
- SCR 136 reactivates the Ancient Mounds Heritage Area and Trails Advisory Commission which will advise the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism about preservation and safety measures regarding Poverty Point State Historic Site and its setting.
- SR 105 requests the Department of Transportation and Development to study solutions to the build-up of sediment around Louisiana Mississippi River ports, to consult with the Department of Agriculture and Forestry, and to provide a written report to the Senate Committees on Transportation. Senator Thompson said, "I brought this Resolution because the deposit of sediment has caused problems at some of our North Louisiana ports on the Mississippi River. This is a critical issue for our farmers who use the ports to transport agricultural crops to market."

Additionally, the Senator says that the legislature was discussed a variety other important issues this session including public safety issues including domestic violence crimes, transportation funding and oil and gas lawsuit reforms.

“Overall, I am pleased with the work we were able to accomplish this session,” said Sen. Thompson. “Despite the many challenges we faced, we were able to address a variety of important issues and improve the conditions and protect the welfare of our citizens. I look forward to continuing to work with all of my constituents to better the community and livelihood of our people.”

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