

2019 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 171

BY SENATOR MILKOVICH

COMMENDATIONS. Commends teachers at Ponchatoula Junior High School who broke up a fight between students and were subsequently relieved of their jobs.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend teachers at Ponchatoula Junior High School who intervened in an altercation
3 between students at the school and were subsequently fired from their positions.

4 WHEREAS, recently, two teachers at Ponchatoula Junior High School intervened
5 in an altercation between students at the school; and

6 WHEREAS, a video of the event that went viral on the internet apparently led to the
7 firing of the two teachers; and

8 WHEREAS, after the firings, another teacher at the school voiced her opinion that
9 the terminations caused teachers to fear that their own jobs would be in jeopardy if they
10 stepped in to break up a fight or physical altercation at the school; and

11 WHEREAS, the teachers protested on Thursday, May 9, 2019, demanding a clear
12 policy from the district administration as to what they are to do should a physical altercation
13 erupt on any campus in the district; and

14 WHEREAS, after the fight and the firings of the teachers, it was reported that
15 seventeen teachers walked off the job at 7:30 a.m. and were joined by some bus drivers,
16 students, and others; and

17 WHEREAS, primarily, the teachers were seeking a clear policy stating what they
18 should and should not do when an altercation erupts within the school, involving students;

1 and

2 WHEREAS, the Tangipahoa Parish School Board meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2019,
3 afforded the teachers a platform to address this issue, but the teachers believed that, though
4 they were allowed to speak, no one was listening, so they followed through on their plan to
5 hold the walk-out; and

6 WHEREAS, the protesting teachers returned to their classrooms on Friday, May 10,
7 having made their feelings known at the school board meeting and again with their walk-out;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the issue of the termination of the teachers who intervened in the
10 altercation and the lack of a clear policy regarding what teachers are allowed to do when a
11 physical altercation between students occurs both remain on the minds of the faculty at
12 Ponchatoula Junior High School and across the district as the school year draws to a close;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, the two teachers who intervened to stop the physical altercation between
15 students should be commended, not punished, for courageously placing themselves at risk
16 to protect the students involved, preserve school discipline, prevent harm to other students,
17 provide a safe educational environment, and present an active display of brave and moral
18 conduct.

19 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
20 does hereby commend the two teachers at Ponchatoula Junior High School who intervened
21 in an altercation between students at the school and, after a video went viral, were terminated
22 from their positions.

23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
24 Dina Esquinance, president of the Tangipahoa Federation of Teachers.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

SR 171 Original

DIGEST
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altercation between students at the school and were fired from their positions.