

OPPOSED

HB 1368

[J.SMITH] EDUCATION: Authorizes BESE to exempt a school district from certain laws, rules, and regulations pursuant to a request and proposal for increasing quality of instruction and academic achievement from the school district] This is the so-called “Red Tape Reduction and Local Empowerment Act.”

The Louisiana Federation of Teachers strongly opposes HB 1368. The Federation believes HB 1368 is bad public policy for at least three basic reasons:



Legislators are lawmakers. The legislature enacts laws. The legislature repeals and amends laws. The legislature does not meet annually to enact suggestions.

HB 1368 authorizes the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to grant petitioning local school superintendents waivers or exemptions to virtually every law governing public education in Louisiana. *HB 1368 is unprecedented in its scope as it cedes legislative powers to another entity. It allows laws duly passed by the legislature to be selectively ignored via a petition by an appointed official to another non-legislative body.*



HB 1368 claims that “quality of instruction and academic achievement” is its main focus. But within its seven pages of text, the collective voices of teachers and local school staff are totally ignored.

HB 1368 does not encourage or invite teachers to identify possible “red tape” that may impede academic achievement or instruction. HB 1368 does not “empower” faculty and staff to engage as respected partners in improving instruction in their districts and schools. In fact, HB 1368 errs in the same fashion as every other top-down reform measure has – it ignores and disrespects the expertise of classroom teachers. HB 1368 does not afford teachers even an honorable mention concerning their important role in the educational process. *HB 1368 paints this picture: Lawmakers pass education laws; local superintendents seek waivers to education laws; BESE grants waivers to education laws --- and teachers must passively comply.*



HB 1368 does not complement previously advanced reform legislation.

Last week, the House overwhelmingly passed HB 1033, which has promised to bring science, add objectivity, and tie student achievement to the teacher evaluation process. So, while HB 1033 serves to “standardize” statewide a large part of a teacher’s evaluation, HB 1368 all but assures that teaching and learning conditions will vary dramatically from district to district and school to school (as a matter of law or the waiver of same). By empowering the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to waive state education law upon the request of a local superintendent, teachers will have no voice regarding the waiving of laws. That may adversely impact teaching and learning conditions, affect the achievement of their students, and impact their evaluations.

HB 1368 is conceptually, fundamentally, and profoundly flawed.

It is dismissive of the role of the legislative branch in enacting, amending, and/or repealing laws. By authorizing the selective enforcement of duly enacted laws, it invites accusations of disparate treatment by districts denied exemptions or waivers.

Perhaps, HB 1368’s most grievous sin is its absolute failure to acknowledge the value, expertise, and voice of teachers. For that reason alone, HB 1368 should be defeated.