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SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 568

Originated in Senate *FitzWelch* Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 568

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING THE SUCCESS OF THE INNOVATIVE CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM ESTABLISHED BY COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL WITH COUNTERPART STUDENTS AND TEACHERS FROM ETAMPES, FRANCE.

WHEREAS, an innovative high school exchange program initiated by a teacher at Columbia High School in Columbia, Mississippi, has revolutionized teaching methods and established an official connection to the students, teachers and residents in Etampes, France; and

WHEREAS, it all began as a simple homework assignment for a class Ms. Beth Pierce, French Teacher at Columbia High School, was taking at Auburn University during the fall semester of 2005. She was asked to create an assignment for her students who used the Internet, and decided to find a site which would pair her French students with pen pals. She left her name and request on a teacher site, and soon heard from Sylvie Cathala, an English Teacher from Etampes, France, a town just outside of Paris; and

WHEREAS, Madame Cathala suggested that they have an actual exchange between the students. In the summer of 2006, Ms. Pierce was in Paris leading a tour of France, and Madame Cathala and Ms. Pierce met in person and arranged for the French students to come to Columbia, Mississippi, in April 2007 for a two-week stay. The community rallied around her efforts, and they made the students feel welcome. Twenty-one high-school-aged students stayed in the homes of Columbia students. They took them to New Orleans, Jackson and to the Mississippi Gulf Coast to see Hurricane Katrina damage, had a crawfish boil and shared Easter activities; and

WHEREAS, the French students attended school with the Columbia students and they continued to stay connected through the Internet. Interest in learning French at Columbia High School exploded following their visit. Ms. Pierce's enrollment doubled the next year, and her students were clearly more motivated than ever to excel in French; and

WHEREAS, in April 2008, the exchange students from Columbia High School went to Etampes, France, for two weeks for their end of the exchange. They stayed with French families and learned about French culture firsthand. Ms. Pierce's 25 students and 5 parents went to school at Geoffroy St. Hilaire High School in Etampes. The students took part in teaching some English classes there, as well as attending their pen pals' daily classes. The Etampes' students prepared numerous events for the Columbia visitors, such as a reception with the mayor's representatives at

their city hall, a dinner and dance in a nearby chateau, a guided walking tour of their city – complete with a visit to their open-air market, a field trip to the Normandy beach sites made famous during the D-Day invasion of World War II, an outing to Louis XIV's Palace of Versailles, and, of course, a visit to the Eiffel Tower in Paris; and

WHEREAS, the exchange has been so successful that the two cities are in the process of becoming official Sister Cities. ~~This exchange has revolutionized Ms. Pierce's teaching practice.~~ Students are more focused on learning, knowing that every year they may have the opportunity to either host an exchange student from Etampes, or travel there. Columbia High School is now offering 4 levels of French: French I, French II, French III and Advanced Placement French. More of the Columbia students than ever are continuing to study French at the university level because of this exchange; and

WHEREAS, the program is preparing for the 2013 visit from their friends in Etampes. Madame Cathala is planning to bring 21 students. They will be taken to Jackson to the State Capitol, where they will be given a legislative resolution. The students will tour the Governor's Mansion, Vicksburg Civil War Battle sites, Port Gibson, the ruins of Windsor Plantation, the University of Southern Mississippi for a campus tour, as well as a walking tour of the City of Columbia, and the students will

receive a welcoming ceremony that will include the Mayor and other elected city officials; and

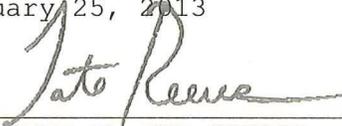
WHEREAS, this exchange has been good for both groups of students, good for the Columbia Community as a whole, and a positive cultural and economic program for the State of Mississippi. These students have made lifelong friends, and have learned far more than what would have been taught to them from a textbook alone, and it is with pride that we look forward to this cultural exchange continuing for many years to come:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize the success of the innovative cultural exchange program established by French Teacher Beth Pierce and the administration of Columbia High School with counterpart students and teacher Madame Cathala from Etampes, France, and extend our congratulations and best wishes for the continuation of this excellent experience.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Ms. Beth Pierce and student representatives from Columbia High School, forwarded to the Superintendent of the Columbia Municipal School District, the State Board of Education and the Mississippi

Development Authority, and made available to the Capitol Press
Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 25, 2013



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
March 5, 2013



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES