

Regular Session, 2008

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 52

BY REPRESENTATIVE DOWNS AND SENATORS B. GAUTREAUX, HEITMEIER,
MOUNT, AND SHAW

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to establish a minimum sound level standard for all new automobiles sold in the United States to ensure the safety of the blind and other pedestrians.

WHEREAS, electric vehicles operate on batteries and are marketed as having the advantage of operating without the sound and smell of standard internal combustion engines, and hybrid vehicles combine conventional gas-powered engines with battery-powered electric motors and, when in the electric mode, also operate without making sound; and

WHEREAS, all pedestrians use the sound of traffic in combination with other techniques to travel safely, as evidenced by the fact that commercial trucks emit a sound when backing up to alert pedestrians to their presence; and

WHEREAS, blind people depend solely on the sound of traffic to determine the location of a traffic light and indication of whether a traffic light is red or green and whether an individual automobile is idling, accelerating, decelerating, or turning left or right, all of which allows a blind person to gauge the time to navigate a crosswalk and to travel independently and safely; and

WHEREAS, action must be taken to ensure that all vehicles emit a sound while turned on, and such a sound from all vehicles must be loud enough to be heard over the din of other ambient noise and be heard from a distance which would allow pedestrians to travel safely, and such a sound must be emitted both while the vehicle is in motion and while motionless, the sound must also change with speed, must not easily be disabled, must not be annoying but still emit a unique sound distinguishable from other noises, and must be uniform from model to model.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby memorialize the United States Congress to take such actions as are necessary to ensure the safety of the blind and other pedestrians by passing legislation requiring the United States Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to adopt regulations establishing a minimum sound level standard for all new automobiles sold in the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the regulations adopted by the United States Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, need not prescribe the method automobile manufacturers must use to achieve the minimum sound standard, but the standard should have the following characteristics:

(1) In all phases of operation, including times when the vehicle is at a full stop, vehicles should be required to emit an omnidirectional sound with similar spectral characteristic of those of a modern internal combustion engine.

(2) The sound should vary in a way that is consistent with the sound of vehicles with combustion engines to indicate whether the vehicle is idling, maintaining a constant speed, accelerating, or decelerating.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the presiding officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States of America and to each member of the Louisiana congressional delegation.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE