***NOTES:***

* *Be sure to use your own letterhead and create a PDF copy of your letter to send.*
* *Modify the text below to fit your purposes.*

*[DATE]*

The Honorable *[Insert title of senator or representative, first name, and last name]*

Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs Committee *[if contacting via the committee]*

131 Airline Dr. Suite 201 Metairie, LA 70001 *[use representative’s address]*

Dear Senator Martiny and Members of Senate Committee on Commerce, Consumer Protection, and International Affairs, [or insert the first and last name of your representative or bill author]

*[NOTE: Modify the text below to fit your purposes.]*

I am writing as a *[member of the National Council on Family Relations, or Certified Family Life Educator, or faculty member at a Certified Family Life Educator-approved university program, or other role]* to express concern with *[insert Bill number, such as]* HB 748’s provisions of voluntary certifications. *[Next, explain why the bill is harmful.]* This bill is a damaging attack on certified professionals and on the ability of the administering professional associations to influence best practices through certification programs in their field. Passing this bill will harm those in the Louisiana workforce and those currently certified as Family Life Educators in our state, as well as university stakeholders (graduates, students, and faculty). *[Provide call to action.]* **I respectfully request you remove HB 748’s prohibition on holders of voluntary certifications using the term “certified” as a title.**

*[The following is sample text. You will need to update this letter based on your reasons for contacting the legislators. Reference to NCFR may be included when advocating for the CFLE credential, the Family Science discipline, and academic tenure to ensure self-preservation of NCFR.]*

The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) is the premier professional association for understanding and strengthening families through interdisciplinary research, theory, and practice. NCFR provides ethical and professional standards to which Family Life Educators, the Family Science discipline, and family professionals must adhere and is the **only** organization across the country to provide certification for Family Life Educators. NCFR would be dramatically and negatively impacted by HB 748. Eliminating the use of the term “certified” removes the incentive for individuals to obtain and maintain their certification. If certified professionals are no longer able to identify themselves as certified, the value of the CFLE credential would be weakened. This could result in a significant loss of revenue and membership for NCFR. HB 748 could have a catastrophic impact on NCFR and the Family Science discipline should other states follow suit.

HB 748 would negatively impact the four Louisiana universities that offer coursework that leads to attainment of the Certified Family Life Educator credential: the University of Louisiana at Lafayette’s Department of Family Studies, the McNeese State University’s Department of Family and Child Studies, the Louisiana Tech University’s Department of Family and Child Studies, and Southeastern Louisiana University’s Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. Devaluing of the CFLE credential due to a restriction of the term “certified” could result in reduced enrollment and revenue at the four universities offering CFLE-approved coursework. Additionally, the possibility exists that revenue for the state of Louisiana would be negatively impacted should professional associations that administer certification programs refrain from holding their conferences in Louisiana because of the damage this bill would do to the professional association.

Prohibiting the use of the term “certified” by qualified, vetted Family Life Education professionals removes an industry-recognized measure of competence and exposes families to potential harm as there would no longer be a signifier for who is best qualified to do work as a Family Life Educator. It is important to note that identifying qualified professionals as “certified” does **not** cause harm to public health and safety, and in fact has a positive impact. Certification provides a means to establish and maintain standards and best practices resulting in the increased quality of goods and services provided to families. Specifically, the CFLE credential is recognized in the state of Utah as important and appropriate for those providing premarital education, as evidenced by the fact that the governor of Utah signed SB0054 into law on March 20, 2018.

Thank you for considering *[write call to action again]* **the elimination of the prohibition on holders of voluntary certifications in bill HB 748**. Please contact *[insert your name and contact information]* for additional information or assistance when discussing this bill.

*[Insert your name]*

*[Insert your name/credentials]*

*[Insert your professional title]*

*[Insert your mailing address]*

*[Insert your email address]*

*[Insert your phone number]*

cc’d: Senator Mack White (Vice-Chairman), Senator R. L. Allain, II, Senator Conrad Appel, Senator Page Cortez, Senator Beth Mizell, Senator Barrow Peacock, Senator Jonathon Perry, and Senator Francis Thompson. *[Delete CC if you are sending the letter to only one person.]*

Attached: PDF of this letter. *[Only include this line if you attach a PDF.]*