

2018 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 42

BY REPRESENTATIVES BARRAS, ABRAHAM, ABRAMSON, AMEDEE, ANDERS, ARMES, BACALA, BAGLEY, BAGNERIS, BERTHELOT, BILLIOT, BISHOP, BOUIE, BRASS, CHAD BROWN, TERRY BROWN, CARMODY, CARPENTER, GARY CARTER, ROBBY CARTER, STEVE CARTER, CHANEY, CONNICK, COUSSAN, COX, CREWS, CROMER, DANAHAY, DAVIS, DEVILLIER, DWIGHT, EDMONDS, EMERSON, FALCONER, FOIL, FRANKLIN, GAINES, GAROFALO, GISCLAIR, GLOVER, GUINN, HALL, JIMMY HARRIS, LANCE HARRIS, HAVARD, HAZEL, HENRY, HENSGENS, HILFERTY, HILL, HODGES, HOFFMANN, HOLLIS, HORTON, HOWARD, HUNTER, HUVAL, IVEY, JACKSON, JAMES, JEFFERSON, JENKINS, JOHNSON, JONES, JORDAN, NANCY LANDRY, TERRY LANDRY, LEBAS, LEGER, LEOPOLD, LYONS, MACK, MAGEE, MARCELLE, MARINO, MCFARLAND, MIGUEZ, DUSTIN MILLER, GREGORY MILLER, MORENO, JAY MORRIS, JIM MORRIS, NORTON, PEARSON, PIERRE, POPE, PUGH, PYLANT, REYNOLDS, RICHARD, SCHEXNAYDER, SEABAUGH, SHADOIN, SIMON, SMITH, STAGNI, STEFANSKI, STOKES, TALBOT, THIBAUT, THOMAS, WHITE, WRIGHT, AND ZERINGUE

A RESOLUTION

To recognize the forty-fourth anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974 and to commend the delegates of the Constitutional Convention of 1973 for their extraordinary public service to the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the forty-fourth anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974 and to commend the delegates of the Constitutional Convention of 1973 upon the successful confection of a new constitution, a collaborative effort of representative democracy considered to be one of the most significant achievements in Louisiana's history during the twentieth century; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974 lies at the epicenter of the infrastructure of state government as a definitive legal instrument that clearly delineates the rights of individuals, describes the distribution of powers among state officials and local governments, and establishes both state and local civil service systems; and

WHEREAS, the delegates of the Constitutional Convention of 1973 drafted the eleventh version of the state's constitution since statehood in 1812; it had previously been reworked in 1845, 1852, 1861, 1864, 1868, 1879, 1898, 1913, and 1921; and

WHEREAS, the predecessor to the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974, the Constitution of Louisiana of 1921, had been amended more than five hundred times to become a conflicted legal quagmire, the second most lengthy of all state constitutions, containing more than two hundred fifty-five thousand words, a large number of outside references, and an excessive amount of detail; and

WHEREAS, lawmakers and government watch-dog organizations such as the Public Affairs Research Council raised objections to the antiquated 1921 Constitution as a hindrance to economic growth and flexibility within state and local governments; and

WHEREAS, in 1971, gubernatorial candidate, Congressman Edwin W. Edwards, ran on a campaign plank to implement a modern constitution and to streamline government; when elected, he was stymied in his efforts to reorganize the executive branch due to the inflexibility of the 1921 Constitution; and

WHEREAS, Act No. 2 of the 1972 Regular Session (House Bill No. 181 by Representative McLeod and others) was the legislative instrument used to bring about change through the creation of the Constitutional Convention of 1973, known as CC73, a collective of one hundred five delegates elected by popular vote from existing districts of the Louisiana House of Representatives and twenty-seven delegates appointed by the governor; and

WHEREAS, the CC73 delegates came from all corners of the state; they represented a cross-section of state demographics, as the greatest generation whose strength of character was forged by the global conflict of World War II, as activists of the "New South" who were the emerging national voice for minorities and women, and as a new generation of political novices taking their first steps in public service; Philip Bergeron was the youngest elected delegate at eighteen years of age; and

WHEREAS, the convention convened on January 5, 1973; the roll call of elected delegates in order beginning with District One was: Jasper K. Smith, Alphonse Jackson, Jr., Wellborn Jack, V.C. Shannon, Tom Stagg, Frank Fulco, Dr. Emmett Asseff, Ford E. Stinson, Charles "Buddy" Roemer, R. Harmon Drew, Bill P. Grier, Kenneth Dale Kilpatrick, E.L.

"Bubba" Henry, Paul David Ginn, Shady Wall, Judge James L. "Jim" Dennis, Thomas W. Leigh, R.M. Elkins, J.A. "Jim" McDaniel, Lantz Womack, Jim Brown, Terry R. Reeves, Donald G. Kelly, H.M. "Mutt" Fowler, Richard S. Thompson, Chris J. Roy, Charles Slay, Lynn Perkins, Cecil R. Blair, F.E. "Pete" Hernandez, Dr. J.E. Stephenson, Errol D. Deshotels, A.J. Planchard, Dr. Gerald N. Weiss, Mack Abraham, Conway LeBleu, Greg Arnette, Jr., Clyde Fontenot, Walter J. Champagne, Jr., Lawrence B. Sandoz, Jr., I. Jackson Burson, Jr., Ralph L. Cowen, Pat Juneau, Heloise C. Corne, E.J. Chatelain, J. Burton Willis, G. Hardee, Jr., Minos H. Armentor, Perry Segura, F.D. "Dan" Winchester, Anthony J. Guarisco, Jr., Stanwood R. Duval, Jr., Charles A. Badeaux, Donald T. Bollinger, Walter I. Lanier, Jr., Eual J. Landry, Sr., Gordon J. Martin, N.E. Carmouche, Louis J. Lambert, Jr., Jessel M. Ourso, Sr., Herman J. "Monday" Lowe, Richard H. Kilbourne, George Dewey Hayes, Gary O'Neill, Harvey W. Cannon, Jr., Louis "Woody" Jenkins, Mary E. Wisham, J.D. De Blioux, Robert J. Aertker, R. Gordon Kean, Jr., Calvin C. Fayard, Jr., Joseph "Joe" E. Anzalone, Jr., Autley B. Newton, James T. "Jim" Burns, B. B. "Sixty" Rayburn, Alvin D. Singletary, Edward J. "Eddie" D'Gerolamo, Wendell H. Gauthier, the Reverend James L. Stovall, Joseph A. Conino, David Conroy, Harold J. Toca, John A. Alario, Jr., Dr. Frank J. Ullo, Joseph F. Toomy, Matthew R. Sutherland, Earl J. Schmitt, Jr., Novyse E. Soniat, Moise W. Dennery, Thomas A. Casey, Louis Landrum, Sr., Edward F. LeBreton, Jr., the Reverend Avery C. Alexander, Anthony J. Vesich, Jr., Claude Mauberret, Jr., James G. Derbes, Thomas A. Velazquez, Joseph I. Giarrusso, Sr., Louis G. Riecke, Sr., Philip O. Bergeron, Johnny Jackson, Jr., George Ethel Warren, Elmer R. Tapper, Samuel B. Nunez, Jr., and Chalin Perez; and

WHEREAS, delegates appointed by the governor to represent particular interests included Edward N. Lennox, industry; Gordon Flory, labor; Horace C. Robinson, education; Anthony M. Rachal, Jr., civil service; John L. "Jack" Avant, wildlife and conservation; Frank M. Edwards, Jr., law enforcement; Albert Tate, Jr., judiciary; Ruth Miller, professions; Hilda Brien, consumers; Robert J. Munson, agriculture; Max N. Tobias, Jr., youth; and Dorothy Mae Taylor, racial minorities; and

WHEREAS, at-large delegates appointed by the governor for extraordinary expertise in law and local governmental affairs included Tom Colten, Ambroise H. Landry, Pegram J. Mire, Clyde F. Bel, Sr., Mary Zervigon, Joe N. Silverberg, John R. Thistlethwaite,

Lawrence A. Chehardy, Kendall Vick, Judy Dunlap, J. K. Haynes, Richard P. Guidry, J. Kenneth Leithman, Risley C. Triche, and Camille F. Gravel, Jr.; and

WHEREAS, delegates appointed to fulfill unexpired terms were Dean Louis Berry, Emile Comar, Jr., Paul H. Goldman, R.W. "Buzzy" Graham, Norman "Pete" Heine, Louis M. Jones, Corrine Maybruce, James W. Morris, Robert G. Pugh, Charles Wattigny, Carolyn Guedry Badeaux, and Paula Sue Kilpatrick; and

WHEREAS, CC73 was a unicameral body comprised of one hundred thirty-two delegates from all walks of life, including some of the best legal minds of the time; it was a self-governing body that employed rules of procedure adopted by the convention, a committee system, compromise and good humor, transparency of process with open debate, news media access, and community involvement with public meetings held across the state to gather public opinion and a sense of popular needs and wants, all of which advanced the acceptance of a new constitution; and

WHEREAS, CC73 was reflective of the changing face of Louisiana's political scene; among those involved were future leaders that included a governor, house clerk, senate secretary, judges, mayors, outstanding attorneys-at-law, and future legislators, such as the African American delegates who were the predecessors of an alliance that would become the Legislative Black Caucus; there were young movers and shakers who were the vanguard of the Young Turks of the 1970s in the Louisiana House of Representatives, and future state officials who would contribute immeasurably to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state and local government; and

WHEREAS, CC73 was a learning process that created a familiarity between delegates and constituents who were often separated by distance and biased by cultural stereotypes; and

WHEREAS, at times, the atmosphere of CC73 was highly contested, but mostly congenial, and strong friendships were forged that have lasted over four decades; and

WHEREAS, the convention adjourned on January 19, 1974, having adopted a proposed draft constitution; and

WHEREAS, the document was attested to with the signatures of its framers, including chairman of the convention, E.L. "Bubba" Henry; vice chairmen, Ruth L. Miller, Thomas A. Casey, the Reverend Avery C. Alexander, and Chris J. Roy; treasurer, Herman

J. "Monday" Lowe; and the remaining convention delegates, which included among its number, Senate President John A. Alario, Jr., then a member of the House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, CC73 was a great success; the delegation drafted a constitutional blueprint for a basic form of state government that was laden with protections for the individual; championed the tenets of equal opportunity, fair labor relations, and small business interests; and expanded voter participation; and

WHEREAS, the draft constitution was submitted to and ratified by the people at a special election held on April 20, 1974; by its own terms, the new constitution became effective at midnight on December 31, 1974; and

WHEREAS, with their approach of change through positive deliberation, the delegates of CC73 left a remarkable legacy of genuine public service to the citizenry of Louisiana who in turn owe a great debt to these framers of the new constitution as their contributions have made Louisiana a better and more prosperous state in which to live.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize the forty-fourth anniversary of the ratification of the Constitution of Louisiana of 1974 and commend the delegates of the Constitutional Convention of 1973 for their extraordinary public service to the state of Louisiana.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES