

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 123

BY SENATOR WILLARD-LEWIS

A RESOLUTION

To commend Reverend Fred Luter Jr., Senior Pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, on being elected first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

WHEREAS, on Tuesday, June 14, 2011, Reverend Fred Luter Jr., the Senior Pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, was elected as first vice president of the predominantly white Southern Baptist Convention at the national convention held in Phoenix, Arizona, marking the first time that an African American has been part of the church's top-level leaders; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptist Convention is a sixteen million member denomination, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Fred Luter Jr., who was a commodities clerk, not even formally ordained when he began his ministry in 1983 gaining experience as a street preacher in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, he took to the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church pulpit in 1986, where the formerly white church congregation had left for the suburbs, and the church having only about sixty members and near extinction; and

WHEREAS, in 1997, Pastor Luter was ordained and installed as pastor on the same day; and

WHEREAS, the congregation grew, and although it became predominantly black, like its changing neighborhood, it maintained its Southern Baptist Convention affiliation; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Luter was the first preacher of color to address the annual convention when he was the keynote speaker at the 2001 national convention in New Orleans, and in 1992, became the first African American elected to the executive board of

the Louisiana Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church congregation is one of an estimated 3,400 predominantly black congregations among the more than 45,700 churches affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, under Pastor Fred Luter's vision and leadership, the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church grew from a membership of sixty five members to a membership of seven thousand plus worshipers; and

WHEREAS, the church was destroyed by floods after Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and in the following months and years, under the leadership of Pastor Luter and with the invaluable assistance and efforts of many volunteers, the congregation has grown to about 5,000, one of the largest Southern Baptist churches in Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the church congregation is in the midst of a major capital campaign to build a new church, its third generation, in eastern New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, the 2012 annual convention will again be held in New Orleans and it is hoped that Pastor Luter will be elected president of the organization at that time.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend Reverend Fred Luter Jr., Senior Pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, on being elected first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Pastor Fred Luter Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE