

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 97

BY SENATOR LAFLEUR

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana for its many contributions made to the state with its history, culture, and people, and to proclaim Wednesday, May 2, 2012, as Tunica-Biloxi Day at the Senate.

WHEREAS, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana was accepted as a member of the federation of Indian tribes recognized by the Congress of the United States in 1981; and

WHEREAS, since that time the state of Louisiana has enjoyed a productive, amicable, and mutually beneficial relationship with the tribe; and

WHEREAS, the historic significance of the Tunica and Biloxi tribes dates back numerous millennia to the original inhabitants of the Americas; as their ancestors resided in the territory that later became the state of Louisiana since time immemorial; as they were the first Native Americans to greet French colonizers, Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville and Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville, in 1669; and

WHEREAS, separate components of the two groups later amalgamated into the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe in the latter portion of the eighteenth century; and

WHEREAS, members of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe fought alongside Don Bernardo de Galvez, Spanish governor of Louisiana, and celebrated the victory over British military forces in the Battle of Baton Rouge in 1779, the only battle of the American Revolution fought outside of the original thirteen colonies; and

WHEREAS, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe now resides on its Indian reservation lands located in Avoyelles Parish, ceded to the tribe by the King of Spain in 1778; and

WHEREAS, historically, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe has preserved key elements of the anthropology of the Americas within its sacred burial mounds, including a treasure trove of artifacts dated back to before recorded history that remain a rich chronicle of the past; and

WHEREAS, these antiquities indigenous to the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe have greatly

enriched the cultural, artistic, and spiritual heritage of the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, some of these artifacts, known as the "Tunica Treasure", were the focus of litigation to reclaim tribal property pilfered from burial sites, which resulted in the largest recovery of archaeological relics ever unearthed in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, these items went on exhibit in the tribal burial mound museum to be studied by scholars and enjoyed by visitors from around the world; and

WHEREAS, construction of a new museum is now underway as part of a unique educational and cultural complex, the Tunica-Biloxi Cultural and Educational Resources Center, to include such elements as a library, conservation laboratory, auditorium, gift shop, conference rooms, and long-distance learning classrooms; a unique facility, second to none, located on a Native American reservation; and

WHEREAS, future plans for conservation and academic exploration of Tunica-Biloxi archaeology will be developed in partnership with state universities that will offer higher education curricula and degree program opportunities; and

WHEREAS, the economic impact of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe has contributed to the rejuvenation of service economies in central Louisiana and has brought much needed employment and prosperity to citizens of the state as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Paragon Casino and Resort, operated by the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe, is a vital partner in the commerce of the region; and

WHEREAS, the political leadership of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana has consistently exhibited great honor, integrity, foresightedness, honesty, and solicitude for its people, thus constituting a major force for progress in the state of Louisiana, the parish of Avoyelles, and those municipalities surrounding its reservation, to the benefit of all; and

WHEREAS, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe has shared its outstanding contributions of economic stimulus and of a wealth of sacred anthropological antiquities with all of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana for its spirit of community and culture and does hereby proclaim Wednesday, May 2, 2012, as Tunica-Biloxi Day at the Senate.

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ENROLLED

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be presented to the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana.

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE