

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 94

BY SENATORS WARD AND CARTER AND REPRESENTATIVE THIBAUT

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To affirm the need for civility in political debate as a fundamental requirement for effective representative democracy and governing.

WHEREAS, representative democracy in the United States of America presents to the world an ongoing experiment as to whether such form of government can be viable, lasting, and most effective over all other forms of government in best serving the needs of its people; and

WHEREAS, a representative democracy is only as good as those whom we elect to represent us, and the resulting laws and policies made by them to which we are subject; and

WHEREAS, a fundamental cornerstone of effective representative democracy and governing is productive communication between the people and their representatives, and among the elected representatives themselves; and

WHEREAS, another fundamental cornerstone of effective representative democracy and governing is the participation by those with differing viewpoints in public political discourse and debate through the robust exchange of ideas; and

WHEREAS, such robust exchange of ideas in public political discourse and debate is an essential component of our political freedom; and

WHEREAS, civility in public political discourse and debate promotes understanding, unity, mutual respect, informed decision-making, reflection, and considerations in the spirit of community for compromise and consensus in the greater good; and

WHEREAS, civility in public political discourse and debate further enhances confidence in our institutions of government, and in the ability of our elected representatives to govern effectively at the federal, state, and local levels; and

WHEREAS, through civility in public political discourse and debate our elected representatives and the public can engage in productive dialogue with each other and among themselves without compromise of core principles or loss of collegiality; and

WHEREAS, civility in public political discourse and debate results from adherence to simple principles, including the following: be inclusive and show respect; listen and pay attention to the words of others; take responsibility for your own words and actions, including apologizing for them when appropriate; strive to be informed, tolerant, and agreeable; in your language seek unity through compromise and consensus rather than fostering division through anger, invective, and harsh rhetoric; and refrain from disparagement of others and from criticism that is not constructive; and

WHEREAS, through civility in their public political discourse and debate, elected representatives demonstrate statesmanship in their interactions and inspire others to act likewise; and

WHEREAS, through civility in their public political discourse and debate, elected representatives foster a spirit of mutual understanding that enhances cooperation and consensus, restores public trust, and leads to more efficient and effective government; and

WHEREAS, by authoring this Resolution the members of the Legislature of Louisiana affirm that by so doing they endorse the essential need for civility in public political discourse and debate, and further that they commit to such civility in their own actions and debate and to seeking others to act likewise.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby affirm the need for civility in political debate as a fundamental requirement for effective representative democracy and governing.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES