

2023 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 121

BY SENATOR CORTEZ

COMMENDATIONS. Commends Senator Gary L. Smith Jr. for his years of distinguished public service.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend the Honorable Gary L. Smith Jr. on his twenty-four years of distinguished
3 public service in the Legislature of Louisiana and to express enduring gratitude for
4 his outstanding contributions made on behalf of his constituents of Jefferson,
5 Lafourche, St. Charles, and St. John the Baptist parishes, and the state of Louisiana,
6 particularly during his tenure as a regarded member of the Louisiana Senate
7 representing District No. 19 and the Louisiana House of Representatives representing
8 District No. 56.

9 WHEREAS, Senator Smith is the epitome of a public servant and has served with
10 distinction during his six terms in the legislature since taking office in 2000; and

11 WHEREAS, Senator Smith is a lifelong resident of the River Parish Region and
12 earned a bachelor of science degree from Louisiana State University, a juris doctor degree
13 from Loyola Law School, and a master of maritime law degree from Tulane Law School;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, Senator Smith did not go into politics with an agenda, but instead with
16 the goal of making Louisiana a better place to live and work, a mentality ingrained in him
17 by his mentor and grandfather Henry A. Smith, who served as treasurer of the State
18 Democratic Party for over twenty years; and

1 WHEREAS, his grandfather impressed upon him that loyalty and trustworthiness are
2 of the utmost importance and that "No matter how thin you slice the cheese, there are always
3 two sides"; and

4 WHEREAS, his grandfather encouraged him to enter into politics in 1989, and he
5 was selected by Congressman Billy Tauzin to serve as a capitol page during the 101st
6 Congress and later served as an intern for Senator John Breaux; and

7 WHEREAS, a few months after law school graduation, he answered his call to public
8 service by entering a crowded field for the House District 56 seat, winning a plurality in the
9 primary and being elected in the run-off with an impressive fifty-six percent of the vote; and

10 WHEREAS, he was sworn in as a member of the Louisiana House of Representatives
11 at the young age of twenty-seven in 2000; and

12 WHEREAS, during his service in the House of Representatives, then-Representative
13 Smith's committee service included serving as a member of the House Committee on
14 Administration of Criminal Justice, the House Committee on Appropriations, the House
15 Committee on Insurance, and the Joint Legislative Committee on the Budget, and as
16 vice-chairman of the House Committee on Commerce and chairman of the Appropriations
17 Subcommittee on Economic Development; and

18 WHEREAS, during his tenure in the Senate, Senator Smith has served with great
19 diligence, dedication, and empathy as chairman of the Senate Committee on Judiciary B for
20 two terms, in addition to serving as a member of the Senate Committee on Insurance, the
21 Senate Committee on Revenue and Fiscal Affairs, the Senate Committee on Transportation,
22 Highways and Public Works, the Senate Executive Committee, and the Joint Legislative
23 Committee on Capital Outlay; and

24 WHEREAS, he has served as a member of the Acadiana Delegation, the Democratic
25 Caucus, the Jefferson Parish Delegation, the River Parishes Caucus, the Louisiana Rural
26 Caucus, the Louisiana Rural Caucus Executive Committee, and as co-chairman of the
27 Louisiana Legislative Sportsmen's Caucus for the last four years; and

28 WHEREAS, Senator Smith is well-known in the legislature for his cool and collected
29 demeanor and his trademark wit and dry sense of humor have diffused many contentious
30 debates; and

1 WHEREAS, his measured and deliberate approach to each issue has earned the deep
2 respect of his colleagues and enabled him to work across party lines to benefit the people of
3 his district and the state; and

4 WHEREAS, as a committee chairman, his composed leadership style and command
5 of the legislative process are evidenced by his level-headed thinking, keen understanding of
6 the importance of timing, and ability to see the big picture; and

7 WHEREAS, he takes particular pride in his ability to utilize his practical, legal, and
8 business expertise throughout the committee process; and

9 WHEREAS, Senator Smith developed a passion for business-related issues,
10 correctional reform, improving transportation infrastructure, and flood protection during his
11 time in the legislature; and

12 WHEREAS, he was instrumental in securing funding necessary for essential
13 infrastructure projects that affect the people of Senate District No. 19 and House District No.
14 56, including water, sewerage, drainage, energy, healthcare, and road projects; and

15 WHEREAS, Senator Smith balances his professional life with a commendable record
16 of community involvement and philanthropic endeavors, including serving on the Board of
17 Governors for the Ochsner Medical Center-Kenner and donating his time for Thanksgiving
18 food basket giveaways and Christmas toy drives; and

19 WHEREAS, he has been the deserving recipient of numerous honors and awards
20 throughout the course of his tenure including the Coastal Conservation Association
21 Louisiana Conservation Champion Award, the Fifth Circuit Judges Association Legislator
22 of the Year Award, the Who's Who in American Politics Award, and the Louisiana
23 Horsemen's Benevolent and Protective Association's Gold Standard Recipient Award; and

24 WHEREAS, Senator Smith is guided by his faith and is an active member of First
25 Baptist Church of Norco, where he serves as an elder; and

26 WHEREAS, he credits his time at the legislature with meeting the love of his life,
27 Katherine Mosely Smith; and

28 WHEREAS, with much in common, including a love for politics, they began a
29 relationship in 2007, were engaged in 2008 on the observation deck of the Louisiana State
30 Capitol, and were married in March 2009; and

