

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 60

BY SENATOR HARRIS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of Ernest Sickey of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, for more than three decades Ernest Sickey was a trailblazing leader of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, located in southwestern Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, the United States recognized the Coushatta as a tribe in 1935, and the United States administratively terminated the Coushatta Tribe's recognition in 1953; and

WHEREAS, Ernest Sickey was born on May 28, 1942, in Lafayette, Louisiana, to Davis Sickey and Daisy Langley Sickey; he was raised in Elton, Louisiana speaking Koasati, Choctaw, English, and French; he served in the United States Air Force from 1962 to 1968; and

WHEREAS, Sickey successfully championed the Coushatta Tribe's state recognition in 1972, marking the first time the state of Louisiana formally recognized an Indian tribe; and

WHEREAS, Sickey led the Coushatta Tribe in efforts for re-recognition by the United States which happened in June of 1973, and served as the tribe's Chairman from 1973 through 1985, and remained a respected leader of the tribe thereafter; and

WHEREAS, under Chairman Sickey's leadership, the Coushatta Tribe engaged in numerous economic development ventures; as a result of Sickey's efforts the Coushatta Tribe has become one of the largest employers in the state of Louisiana, employing approximately two-thirds of the residents of Allen Parish; and

WHEREAS, Sickey's advocacy extended beyond the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; due to his urging, the Louisiana Legislature created the Office of Indian Affairs, of which Sickey served as the first director; Sickey formed the Inter-Tribal Council of Louisiana, Inc. (ITCLA), which consists of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana, the Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana, the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana, and the

United Houma Nation; Sickey played a vital role in helping both the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana and the Jena Band of Choctaw Indians achieve federal recognition and staunchly supported the United Houma Nation's federal recognition effort; and

WHEREAS, Sickey was a key leader in the Indian Civil Rights Movement that culminated in the United States adopting the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975, a policy of tribal self-determination which continues today; under Sickey's leadership, the Coushatta Tribe became one of the first tribes to join the United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET), a nonprofit inter-tribal organization that serves thirty-three federally recognized tribes from Texas to Maine; Sickey also testified before the United States Congress, addressed the United Nations, and helped create important precedents for indigenous rights throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, two of Sickey's six sons served at different times as Chairman of the Coushatta Tribe; both sons continued his vision of and dedication to tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and leadership; and

WHEREAS, after eighty years of fighting for the civil, political, and economic rights of all Louisianians, Sickey passed away on May 17, 2023, only a few weeks before the 50th anniversary of the federal government's re-recognition of the Sovereign Nation of the Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; the people of Louisiana are grateful for and proud of Ernest Sickey's life and legacy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend deepest condolences to the family and friends of Ernest Sickey and recognizes and records for posterity his significant contributions to the state of Louisiana and Indian Country.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Ernest Sickey.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES