

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 82

BY SENATOR COUSSAN

A RESOLUTION

To designate May 8, 2024, as Pickleball Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

WHEREAS, in 1965, Joel Pritchard, a congressman representing the state of Washington, and a friend Bill Bell, played the first pickleball match on an old badminton court with ping-pong paddles and a perforated plastic ball; and

WHEREAS, the following weekend, they introduced another friend, Barney McCallum, to the game they invented and together the three men created rules, relying heavily on badminton, keeping in mind the original purpose, which was to provide a fun game that the whole family could play together; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, a corporation was formed to protect the creation of this new sport; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, the United States Amateur Pickleball Association (USAPA) was organized to perpetuate the growth and advancement of pickleball on a national level, with the first rulebook being published in March of that year; and

WHEREAS, after years of steady increase in participation, pickleball has seen a rise in popularity in recent years because of its easy learning curve and use of pre-existing tennis infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the estimated number of pickleball players has increased to thirteen million six hundred thousand in the United States as of 2023, according to a 2024 Sports & Fitness Industry Association report; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana, particularly the Lafayette region, is part of the pickleball craze sweeping the country; and

WHEREAS, in September, 2023, plans were unveiled for a one hundred twenty thousand square-foot indoor sports complex to be built by Lafayette Consolidated Government at the site of Beaulieu Park and Comeaux Recreation Center, the only facility of its kind between Jacksonville, Florida, and Houston, Texas, along the Interstate 10 corridor; and

WHEREAS, the sports complex will have about three times the floor space of the Cajundome, offering eight basketball courts and sixteen volleyball courts, with the versatility to accommodate other indoor sports like pickleball and wrestling; and

WHEREAS, other Lafayette-area parks have joined the pickleball sensation by adding courts, including the Thomas Park Recreational Center, the George Dupuis Recreational Center, and Youngsville Sports Complex, among others; and

WHEREAS, the growth of pickleball's popularity has encouraged entrepreneurs from Lafayette, like Bruce Smith and his company, Battle Cry Sports, to design, market, and sell a line of specialized pickleball paddles for competitive and skilled play; and

WHEREAS, Lafayette locals Jenny Thibodeaux, Jacques Poirrier, Paul Azar III, Benjamin Roth, and Stephen Roma were inspired to establish the Lafayette Pickleball Club, which recently opened a facility with six indoor climate-controlled courts and a membership list growing every day; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has truly embraced the founders' original purpose of pickleball to provide a fun game that the whole family can participate in and enjoy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate May 8, 2024, as Pickleball Day at the Louisiana State Capitol.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Bruce Smith, Jenny Thibodeaux, Jacques Poirrier, Paul Azar III, Benjamin Roth, and Stephen Roma.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE