

1 WHEREAS, after his ordination in Florida, Reverend Graham attended Wheaton
2 College in Illinois, where he met Ruth Bell, who he described as a "hazel-eyed movie starlet"
3 and who became the love of his life and the supportive partner in his life's mission of
4 proclaiming the gospel of the Lord and the good news of God's forgiveness; and

5 WHEREAS, having graduated from Wheaton College with a degree in anthropology,
6 Billy Graham and his beloved Ruth were married on August 13, 1943, beginning a love story
7 that would span nearly sixty-five years and bring into the world three daughters and two
8 sons; and

9 WHEREAS, during World War II Billy Graham served in the United States Army
10 chaplain corps and in 1944 he was granted a discharge to begin an extensive ministry with,
11 what would become Youth for Christ, traveling around the country, preaching to young
12 audiences; and

13 WHEREAS, heeding the call to conduct a broad and far-reaching ministry, Reverend
14 Graham continued his youth ministry, conducted his first city-wide crusade in Grand Rapids,
15 Michigan in September 1947, published his first book *Calling Youth to Christ*, and in 1949,
16 he turned his attention to preparations for the "Christ for Greater Los Angeles" crusade held
17 later that year; and

18 WHEREAS, the Los Angeles crusade brought Reverend Billy Graham to national
19 prominence through extensive media coverage, both in the United States and abroad, as the
20 planned three week event stretched to eight weeks and drained the reverend physically,
21 mentally, and emotionally, but reached three hundred fifty thousand attendees and welcomed
22 the commitment to Christ of thousands; and

23 WHEREAS, Reverend Graham, in addition to conducting more than four hundred
24 crusades over the decades of his ministry, sought to reach ever bigger audiences by
25 employing the media devices of the day, establishing a radio program in 1950, *Hour of*
26 *Decision*, that was eventually aired by the American Broadcasting Corporation and followed
27 in 1952 with the publication of his first *My Answer* newspaper column; and

28 WHEREAS, the Reverend Billy Graham was a household name, but that was not
29 enough, he was tireless in broadening his ministry, striving to bring the word of God to as
30 many audiences as possible while setting a standard in his life of transparency, humility,

1 simplicity, and integrity which has rarely been equaled; and

2 WHEREAS, through the years, Billy Graham and his wife, Ruth, traveled the world,
3 to Africa and the Middle East in 1960, to South Africa in 1973, to the United Kingdom in
4 1966, 1985, and in 1989 to London where, using satellite technology, the meeting was
5 broadcast to two hundred fifty locations in Great Britain; and to Buenos Aires, Argentina in
6 1991, where, using the same technology, the visit was broadcast to twenty additional
7 Spanish-speaking countries; clearly Reverend Graham was untiring in his travels and his
8 outreach throughout the world; and

9 WHEREAS, when the United States was attacked on September 11, 2001, the Billy
10 Graham Evangelistic Association developed a biblically-based grief and trauma training
11 protocol to minister to the victims of that horrendous terrorist attack and that program
12 ultimately developed into the Billy Graham Rapid Response Team, which was deployed to
13 Lafayette, Louisiana, in 2002 to minister to hurricane victims and has since been deployed
14 to more than one hundred fifty disaster zones; and

15 WHEREAS, the Reverend Billy Graham was personally acquainted with more than
16 ten United States presidents, from President Truman through President Obama, and George
17 W. Bush states that Reverend Graham was influential in the lives of the former president and
18 his wife, Laura, often giving credit to Reverend Graham with a critical role in helping
19 President Bush move away from a life without focus and tainted with liquor; and

20 WHEREAS, at the Reverend's home in Montreat, having traveled with his wife to
21 pay their respects and those of his parents to this Christian icon, the former president stated
22 "if there is such a thing as a humble Shepard of the Lord, Billy Graham is that person"; and

23 WHEREAS, Reverend Graham was admired by people around the world, including
24 numerous heads of state and many of the twentieth century's most notable leaders, including:
25 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., who provided the opening prayer at one of Graham's services
26 during the 1957 New York City Crusade and who accepted the assistance of Reverend
27 Graham in 1965 following the violence at the march in Selma, Alabama, and Queen
28 Elizabeth II, who became an admirer of Reverend Graham early in her reign, another of
29 legions of leaders around the world; and

30 WHEREAS, Reverend Billy Graham was at Texas A & M University in College

1 Station, Texas on April 10, 2006, to receive the George Bush Award for Public Service from
2 the forty-first president at his presidential library located on the university campus; and

3 WHEREAS, Rev. Billy Graham and wife, Ruth, were particularly formidable when
4 working as a team and that teamwork was felt both around the world and at home in
5 Appalachia where they worked for better health care for the children in that area, including
6 a hospital in Asheville, North Carolina, for which the couple received the Congressional
7 Medal of Honor in 1966; and

8 WHEREAS, at a visit to Angola State Penitentiary in Louisiana, the largest
9 maximum security prison in the nation, early in this century, Reverend Graham, at the prison
10 to dedicate a prisoner-built and privately funded chapel, saw the inmates building simple
11 plywood caskets for the burial of fellow inmates and Reverend Graham and wife, Ruth, were
12 each buried in those plain caskets made by the prisoners at the Angola facility, another sign
13 of their humility and an interesting link to Louisiana; and

14 WHEREAS, despite his humble beginnings, the Reverend Billy Graham, through the
15 grace of the Lord, brought the good news of God's forgiveness and of eternal life to tens of
16 millions, resulting in commitments to Christ of millions around the world and, while he
17 walked with the politically powerful throughout the world, Billy Graham never held himself
18 above others, but, rather, he was a humble man of God who lived a very public life while
19 holding firm to the teachings of scripture and serving as an example and a testament to living
20 a Christ-centered life.

21 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
22 express sincere condolences upon the death of William Franklin "Billy" Graham Jr., well
23 known as "America's pastor" and a much admired and beloved Christian preacher.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
25 Reverend Billy Graham's children.

