

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 74

BY SENATOR ABRAHAM

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Ravi Zacharias, head of a global ministry and best-selling author.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of the passing of Ravi Zacharias on May 19, 2020, at age seventy-four, after a brief battle with cancer; and

WHEREAS, the popular author and Christian teacher was known for his work through Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM), which focused on apologetic arguments for the existence of God and the reasonableness of Christianity, with the mission of "helping the thinker believe and the believer think"; and

WHEREAS, he spent much of his time in ministry responding to philosophical attacks, insisting his faith held the answers to life's central questions of origin, meaning, morality, and destiny; preached in more than seventy countries, and authored more than thirty books, encouraging Christians to engage with skeptics by presenting reasoned, respectful, yet robust, answers to humanity's existential questions; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Antony Ravi Kumar Zacharias was born in Madras (now Chennai), India, in 1946, to Isabella and Oscar, and was raised in the Anglican faith; and

WHEREAS, Zacharias, while still a skeptic, discovered his calling at age seventeen after trying to take his life by swallowing poison and, while recovering, he turned to the Bible and shortly thereafter began the study and the work which would eventually lead him to his calling as a Christian apologist; and

WHEREAS, he immigrated to Canada at the age of twenty and graduated with a Bachelor of Theology degree from Ontario Bible College (Tyndale College and Seminary) in Toronto, Ontario, in 1972; and

WHEREAS, after a formative trip to several countries, including Vietnam and Cambodia, he moved to Deerfield, Illinois, graduated with a Master of Divinity from Trinity

Evangelical Divinity School in 1976, and taught at the Alliance Theological Seminary in New York while continuing to travel; and

WHEREAS, the Rev. Billy Graham invited Zacharias to preach at the inaugural International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam in 1983 and a year later founded Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM) in 1984, an organization that has grown to about two hundred employees in sixteen offices around the world, with more than seventy traveling speakers; and

WHEREAS, in the 1980s, he began a weekly half-hour radio program, "Let My People Think", which is now syndicated to over two thousand stations in thirty-two countries; and

WHEREAS, his first published book was entitled *A Shattered Visage: The Real Face of Atheism* in 1990; his best-selling book, *Can Man Live Without God?*, was awarded the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association (ECPA) Christian Book Award; two other Christian best sellers were *Jesus Among Other Gods* and *The Grand Weaver*, and his most recent book, *The Logic of God: 52 Christian Essentials for the Heart and Mind*, won the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association's 2020 Christian book award in the Bible study category; all of which have been sold in over one hundred thirteen countries; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, he was the keynote speaker at the Veritas Forum, an event which is committed to conversations between persons of the Christian faith and people from different backgrounds with other beliefs and is hosted on the campus of Harvard University; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, he established the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics at Oxford University (OCCA), where he was an honorary senior research fellow between 2007 and 2015, and at which has trained over four hundred students from fifty countries; and

WHEREAS, in the same year, he formed Wellspring International, the humanitarian division of the ministry as an outreach in memory of his mother's work with the destitute; and

WHEREAS, in 2015, he spoke at the Louisiana Governor's Prayer Breakfast and, in recent years, Mr. Zacharias made three trips to visit with inmates at Angola State Penitentiary; on his third and final visit to the prison in 2019, he experienced a sharing of

faith in his interaction with those on Death Row which he would later say, "... make it impossible to block the tears" and, as an expression of his deep connection with the inmates that developed since his first visit, the prisoners made him the casket in which he was buried; and

WHEREAS, in what proved to be his last speaking engagement, Zacharias spoke to a crowd of over seven thousand at the University of Miami's Watsco Center on the subject of "Does God Exist?"; and

WHEREAS, his international outlook and the ease at which he interacted with people around the world opened doors that had been closed for many years as a global leader, including four appearances at the United Nations since 2000; and

WHEREAS, he is survived by his wife of forty-eight years, Margie; daughters, Sarah and Naomi; son, Nathan; and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, he saw the objections and questions of others not as something to be rebuffed, but as a cry of the heart that had to be answered; and

WHEREAS, those who knew him well will remember him for his kindness, gentleness, generosity of spirit, and for his philanthropy.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere condolences upon the death of Ravi Zacharias, head of a global ministry and best-selling author.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his wife, Margie Zacharias.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES