

2022 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 118

BY REPRESENTATIVE SELDERS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend the Louisiana Art & Science Museum on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, on July 24, 1962, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum was granted its 501(c)3 nonprofit status to enhance the understanding and appreciation of art and science for general audiences and students by presenting unique, educational, and entertaining experiences that encourage discovery, inspire creativity, and foster the pursuit of knowledge; and

WHEREAS, in 1988, the city-parish government purchased the old Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Passenger Railway Station from the Illinois Central Railroad for \$100,000 and leased the building to the Louisiana Art & Science Museum for a term of ninety-nine years through 2087; in 1998, the old train depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places; and

WHEREAS, in 1998, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum entered into an agreement with both the state of Louisiana and the city of Baton Rouge for a \$16.8 million project to build a planetarium, atrium, education rooms, and galleries at the south end of the building; in 1999, the Irene W. and C.B. Pennington Foundation funded an endowment for the operations of the planetarium; and

WHEREAS, on May 22, 2003, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum opened the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium and ExxonMobil Space Theater; the planetarium, with its sixty-foot dome and seating for one hundred seventy-one spectators, is one of the largest and most technologically advanced planetariums in the southeastern United States; since its inception in 2003, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium has welcomed over one million visitors; and

WHEREAS, in 2019, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum welcomed over one hundred seventy-five thousand program participants; of these participants, one hundred five thousand were K-12 students from more than forty parishes in Louisiana and five counties in Mississippi; additionally, 18% of these participants were tourists; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum survived the shutdowns encountered by nearly one-third of the nation's museums as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; the pandemic resulted in a significant reduction in the museum's earnings, staffing, and visitation; during the tumultuous year, the museum remained open to the public as mandates allowed and created a free-access, virtual museum and digital learning platform to engage isolated individuals and quarantined audiences, including those in healthcare and hospice facilities; in total, over forty thousand individuals were provided virtual and onsite programs in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum and Irene W. Pennington Planetarium remains accredited by the American Alliance of Museums, a standard held by only 6% of museums nationwide; it houses over four thousand works of art, including Louisiana modern and contemporary art, American art, European art, and scientific objects and antiques that include an authentic mummy housed in one of the only permanent ancient Egypt galleries in the southeastern United States; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum secured over \$500,000 in relief funding; as a "Blue Star" museum, it offers free admission to veterans, active military members, first responders, and the families of these individuals; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum, in partnership with local corporations, provided over three thousand high-needs students with STEAM-based virtual education programs to introduce them to concepts and careers in STEAM-based occupations; and

WHEREAS, this year, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum celebrates the sixtieth anniversary of its status as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization; this momentous occasion will be marked with a collections catalog and a fundraising Gala titled "Diamonds of History", which will feature the piece *Mighty Women* by Ashley Longshore; the event will also mark the beginning of extensive renovations to the museum's state-of-the-art, hands-on children's galleries after two years of delays brought on by the pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum has a full calendar ahead of it for the next three years; in 2023, it will celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Irene C. Pennington Planetarium; in 2024, the museum will celebrate the sixtieth anniversary of its acquisition of the only authentic mummy in the state of Louisiana; and in 2025, it will celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of its historically significant building; and

WHEREAS, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum is a true treasure to both the city of Baton Rouge and the state of Louisiana; it is most deserving of the highest recognition for its fortitude during the pandemic and on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Louisiana Art & Science Museum on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary; does hereby further recognize the museum for educating our region's youth in both art and science in order to reduce drop-out rates and increase workforce development in STEAM-based careers; and does hereby extend sincere support for the Louisiana Art & Science Museum, including the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium, for its commitment to the service of the general public, students, and tourists and thereby enhancing the state's educational, cultural, and economic development.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be sent to the president and executive director of the Louisiana Art & Science Museum.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE