

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 188

BY SENATORS PEACOCK, ABRAHAM, ALLAIN, BARROW, BERNARD, BOUDREAUX, BOUIE, CARTER, CATHEY, CLOUD, CONNICK, CORTEZ, DUPLESSIS, FESI, FIELDS, FOIL, HARRIS, HENRY, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JACKSON, KLEINPETER, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MCMATH, MILLIGAN, FRED MILLS, ROBERT MILLS, MIZELL, MORRIS, POPE, PRICE, REESE, SMITH, STINE, TALBOT, TARVER, WHITE AND WOMACK

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Laura Gail Sullivan for her decades of dedicated and distinguished public service.

WHEREAS, Laura Gail was born in Jennings, Louisiana, to Catherine Calhoun Edgar and the late Sidney James Sullivan Jr. as the eldest of their four children, and she is also big sister to a bonus younger brother from her father's second marriage; and

WHEREAS, Laura Gail is a 1983 graduate of Lake Arthur High School in Jefferson Davis Parish, a 1987 graduate of Centenary College of Louisiana with a bachelor's in mathematics, a 1991 graduate of Louisiana State University with a master's in journalism, and a 1993 graduate of California Western School of Law with a juris doctorate; and

WHEREAS, Laura Gail was admitted to the Louisiana State Bar in 1995 and the California State Bar in 1996; and

WHEREAS, in April of 1994, Laura Gail began her public service career as a judicial clerk for the Louisiana Second Circuit Court of Appeal Judge Charles "Corky" Marvin from whom she learned "There is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting", which became an art that she perfected through her career; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, she transferred to the gaming division of the Louisiana Department of Justice as an assistant attorney general, and in 1997, she went to work for the House of Representatives for the first time as the staff attorney for the House Labor and Industrial Relations committee with Chairman Representative Charlie DeWitt; she often credits Chairman DeWitt for sharing political insights and helping her to learn how to "read a room" and "read a vote"; and

WHEREAS, in mid-1999, she left the legislature for a brief time to work in the

private sector, but in January of 2000, Laura Gail returned to the House of Representatives to again staff the House Committee on Labor and Industrial Relations, and less than a year later transferred to the House Committee on Health and Welfare to work with Chairman Rodney Alexander; it was during her time with health and welfare that she drafted, at the request of Representatives Cedric Glover and Tony Perkins, the legislation she is most proud of – Act 109 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2000 that provides a safe haven for relinquishment of newborn babies; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, she transferred to the House Committee on Retirement and it is in that subject matter that she found her niche, spending the balance of her public service career mastering the intricacies of the law and challenges on the various retirement systems; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, Laura Gail moved to the "upper chamber" to staff the Senate Committee on Retirement; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, she was promoted to Senate Counsel, and it was during the 2008-2012 term that she recalls having a "dream team" legislative experience working under Senate retirement chairman Senator Dudley "Butch" Gautreaux with Senate staff attorney Lauren Bailey and secretary Janice Hughes and House retirement chairman Representative Joel Robideaux and House staff attorney Matt Tessier and secretary Karen Stephens, and Legislative Auditor staff Paul Richmond; working together, the "dream team" drafted and the legislature passed a workable strategy to address the state's initial unfunded accrued liability (IUAL), yielding a final payoff in 2029; and

WHEREAS, in addition to her committee staffing responsibilities, since becoming Senate Counsel in 2008, Laura Gail has also had responsibilities as Amendment Room Manager and Night Manager and has staffed numerous task forces and legislative commissions and served as her chairman's designee on several retirement boards and committees; and

WHEREAS, in 2020, Laura Gail was appointed a division director in the Senate, the position she currently holds; and

WHEREAS, during her Senate career, Laura Gail has directly staffed or supervised the staff of eleven of the Senate's seventeen standing committees; and

WHEREAS, in her quiet, determined, and understated manner, Laura Gail embodies and upholds the highest ideals intrinsic to a successful legislative staffer; and

WHEREAS, Laura Gail always approaches her work in an intentional, practical fashion – every issue thoroughly researched, every response carefully considered, and every legislative instrument drafted and redrafted to be clean, precise, and reflect the author's intent; and

WHEREAS, all who interact with Laura Gail are impressed by her intelligence, competence, dedication, honesty, and integrity; undergirding her character is her intense loyalty to those fortunate to be counted among her friends; and

WHEREAS, Laura Gail's institutional knowledge of her subject matter and the legislative process is vast and deep; to simply say that she will be missed by her colleagues is a serious understatement; and

WHEREAS, despite her workload and personal responsibilities, Laura Gail always makes time to help a colleague; she often speaks of the love and support she felt from her "Senate Family" during her battle with cancer and the perspective it brought to her life, making the return of this affection even more of a priority for her than it was before her battle; and

WHEREAS, in the years that follow, Laura Gail shall fondly recall memories and significant events from the past, the rarefied environment that is state government, and the colorful cast of characters that have graced the halls of the Legislature of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Laura Gail Sullivan on the occasion of her retirement after three decades of dedicated and distinguished public service; does hereby acknowledge and recognize the myriad of contributions she has made on behalf of this august body and the state of Louisiana; and does hereby extend to her best wishes and much success and fulfillment as she enters the next chapter of her life.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ms. Laura Gail Sullivan.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE