

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 145

BY SENATORS STINE, ABRAHAM, BOUDREAUX AND REESE

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate former Senator Ronnie S. Johns on the occasion of his retirement.

WHEREAS, Ronnie Johns has made significant contributions to the state of Louisiana through his extensive service in elected office and as a regulatory leader in the gaming industry; and

WHEREAS, Johns is a native of Bunkie, Louisiana, and a graduate of Bunkie High School; he holds a Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Louisiana at Monroe and he began his professional career in Bunkie as a pharmacist in 1972; and

WHEREAS, Johns extensive record of public service includes both local and state government; he followed in his father's footsteps to serve on the Bunkie City Council from 1978 to 1982, before changing careers from a pharmacist to an insurance agent and moving from Bunkie to DeRidder before settling in Sulphur, Louisiana, in 1983; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, he was appointed to the Louisiana State Mineral Board by then Governor Charles "Buddy" Roemer and served on that board until 1992; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, he was elected to represent District 33 in the Louisiana House of Representatives, where he proudly served from 1996 until 2008; in 2009, he was appointed by then Governor Bobby Jindal to the Louisiana Lottery Corporation Board of Directors, serving as its chairman until 2011; and

WHEREAS, in 2011, he was elected without opposition to serve District 27 in the Louisiana Senate, and he easily won reelection in 2015, and was again elected without opposition in 2019; and

WHEREAS, Johns served the people of Southwest Louisiana with distinction for twelve years as a Representative and nine years as a Senator, championing many issues, but is best known for his dedication and leadership addressing adoption and foster care issues and human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, for his efforts, Johns was recognized in Washington, D.C. by the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute as an Angel in Adoption and by the United Way of Southeast Louisiana as a Legislative Champion for Public Policy for his work on human trafficking; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, he was appointed by then Governor John Bel Edwards to serve as chairman of the Louisiana Gaming Control Board; and

WHEREAS, Johns assumed leadership of the Gaming Control Board shortly after sports wagering was approved by voters in 55 of the state's 64 parishes, bringing his legislative experience to the complex process of developing sports wagering regulations; and

WHEREAS, developing sports wagering regulations was a challenging process that required addressing legal complexities, ensuring technological safeguards, and recognizing problem gambling, all of which were handled with patience and diligence under Johns' leadership; and

WHEREAS, also during Johns' tenure as chairman, Louisiana's gaming industry saw two of the fifteen legacy riverboat licenses become first-class, land-based properties, and another three properties under similar extensive renovation; and

WHEREAS, Johns' leadership and integrity made a lasting impact on Louisiana's gaming industry, ensuring fair and efficient regulation and contributing significantly to the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, in all of his time as a public servant, Senator Ronnie Johns has shown himself to be a truly visionary leader, guided by his commitment to integrity and innate ability to work with all parties for the betterment of his community and the state; and

WHEREAS, by his side and his strongest supporter throughout his career has been his beautiful wife, Michelle; in this next chapter, Senator Johns and Michelle plan to spend as much time as possible enjoying life with their beloved daughter, Claire, her husband, Marcus, and their adorable grandchildren, Lawston, Hudson, Francis, Locke and Lettie.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate former Senator Ronnie S. Johns on the occasion of his retirement and extends best wishes for continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to former Senator Ronnie Johns.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE