

2026 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 64

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

CONDOLENCES. Expresses sincere and heartfelt condolences on the passing of former Louisiana Medicaid Director Josephine Ruth Kennedy.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To express sincere and heartfelt condolences on the passing of former Louisiana Medicaid
3 Director Josephine Ruth Kennedy.

4 WHEREAS, it is with profound sorrow that the people of Louisiana have learned of
5 the passing of Josephine Ruth Kennedy, who departed this life peacefully at her home on
6 Friday, March 20, 2026, at the age of seventy-one; and

7 WHEREAS, Josephine Ruth Kennedy, lovingly known by all as Ruth Kennedy, was
8 born on December 1, 1954, in Independence, Louisiana, and was raised in Springfield on her
9 family's strawberry farm by her parents, Josephine and Walter Kennedy, in a close-knit
10 family that instilled in her the values of faith, service, and hard work that would guide her
11 throughout her life; and

12 WHEREAS, she graduated from Springfield High School in 1972, attended Oregon
13 Bible College from 1972 to 1974, and continued her education at Southeastern Louisiana
14 University from 1975 to 1979, preparing herself for a life of service to others; and

15 WHEREAS, Ruth Kennedy was a lifelong and devoted member of Blood River
16 Church of God, where she faithfully shared her faith, taught others, and demonstrated
17 compassion and generosity through her service to her church and community, touching
18 countless lives through her kindness and encouragement; and

1 WHEREAS, she built an honorable and distinguished career spanning more than
2 forty years in public service with the Louisiana Department of Health, dedicating herself to
3 ensuring that families across Louisiana had access to essential health services and
4 opportunities for care; and

5 WHEREAS, through her leadership, innovation, and determination, she helped lead
6 major initiatives to expand health coverage and improve care delivery across the state,
7 including the implementation and expansion of the Louisiana Children's Health Insurance
8 Program (LaCHIP) and the development of Bayou Health, and was known for personally
9 traveling throughout the state to assist families in obtaining health coverage; and

10 WHEREAS, Ruth Kennedy was promoted to serve as Louisiana Medicaid Director,
11 where she oversaw a program that supported more than one million Louisianans and guided
12 efforts to expand coverage to an additional four hundred thousand working adults who
13 otherwise had limited access to health care; and

14 WHEREAS, her tireless dedication and expertise earned her widespread respect from
15 colleagues, policymakers, and healthcare providers across Louisiana and throughout the
16 nation, and in recognition of her exemplary service to the citizens of Louisiana, she was
17 honored with the prestigious "Dunbar Award" in 2015, the highest honor bestowed upon
18 classified state employees; and

19 WHEREAS, after retiring from state government in 2017, Ruth Kennedy continued
20 her work to improve health care access and policy by joining Southern Strategy Group,
21 where she assisted providers and pharmacies, helped streamline eligibility verification
22 programs, supported hospital systems, and worked to expand opportunities for care and
23 professional training for pharmacy technicians across the state and beyond; and

24 WHEREAS, throughout her life, Ruth Kennedy was known as a pioneer who was
25 fearless, resourceful, and deeply compassionate, guided by her unwavering faith and
26 commitment to helping individuals and families who otherwise would have gone without
27 needed care; and

28 WHEREAS, Ruth Kennedy is survived by her sisters, Betty Gay Rena and Regina
29 McCord; her brother, Joseph Kennedy and his wife, Sharon; her sister-in-law, Loretta
30 Kennedy; her special cousin, Sharon Irby Derbins; her special niece, Kay Kinchen; and

