

Regular Session, 2013

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 130

BY SENATOR ALARIO

CONDOLENCES. Expresses condolences upon the death of Ralph Perlman, former Budget Director for the state of Louisiana.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To express the sincere condolences of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the passing of
3 former state budget director and dedicated public servant, Ralph Perlman, and to
4 commemorate a life well spent in service to his country and his state, and to note the
5 proud legacy he leaves to its citizens.

6 WHEREAS, it is with deep sadness that the Legislature of Louisiana has learned of
7 the death of Ralph Perlman on May 24, 2013, eight days after his ninety-sixth birthday; and

8 WHEREAS, he was born in New York, New York, on May 16, 1917, a first
9 generation American born to European immigrants, Harry and Bessie Perlman; and

10 WHEREAS, after graduation from high school, he earned an undergraduate degree
11 from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, and then obtained a master's degree in
12 Business from Columbia University in New York City; and

13 WHEREAS, in the midst of World War II with enlistment in the military as an
14 officer, Ralph Perlman came south to Camp Van Dorn, a United States Army Post located
15 near Centreville, Mississippi; there he met his future spouse, a southern lady named
16 Carole Herzberg, with whom he shared a dance and the next four decades of his life until her
17 untimely death in 1981; he served with distinction in the European Theater as an artillery
18 officer with the Sixty-third Infantry Division; and

1 WHEREAS, at the conclusion of World War II and honorably discharged from
2 military service, Ralph established a home in Baton Rouge and went into business; and

3 WHEREAS, with a keen mind for facts and figures and an acute sense for fiscal
4 discipline, Ralph first entered the realm of state government in 1964 when he went to work
5 for Governor John J. McKeithen as the governor's executive assistant to the commissioner
6 of administration within the Division of Administration and thus began a distinguished
7 career in state government that would last over forty years; and

8 WHEREAS, in 1967, he became state budget director within the office of Planning
9 and Budget and held that position for more than twenty-one years; and

10 WHEREAS, as the state's budget director he was responsible for financial analysis
11 and budget development for all state agencies and departments within the executive branch;
12 other exemplary accomplishments included the development of the Office of State Group
13 Insurance, which provided life and health policies for state employees, and his oversight of
14 the five million dollar investment of state funds in the development of the 1984 World's Fair
15 held in New Orleans; and

16 WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman was responsible for training more than seventy-five
17 budget analysts over his career; many of whom are presently in the highest ranks of public
18 finance in state government; and

19 WHEREAS, as new employees came under his tutelage, Mr. Perlman advised them
20 to obtain firsthand knowledge of the fiscal needs of each assigned budget unit with a field
21 visit, to become familiar with its accounting personnel, funding sources, and budget
22 expenditures, to become a steward of the financial needs of that state agency, and to make
23 every effort possible to secure essential funding; and

24 WHEREAS, Mr. Perlman, at times, had a gruff exterior and could be "a very tough
25 cookie" when guarding the state fisc as if it were his own personal budget, but he also had
26 a tender heart when it came to the securing of funds for the disadvantaged, the infirm, the
27 elderly, and the downtrodden; and

28 WHEREAS, Mr. Perlman had an amusing side to his character; he was always on the
29 ready to diffuse a tense budget negotiation with a joke that could be delivered with the rapier
30 wit of Buddy Hackett and the timing of Henny Youngman; and

1 WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman had a penchant for colorful neckties and fine cigars; that
2 image of him puffing away on that ever-present corona while he "smoked out" the facts has
3 been indelibly imprinted in the memories of whomever appeared before him with a budget
4 request; and

5 WHEREAS, in 1980, the Senate of Louisiana began a pilot project to create a
6 computerized appropriations and capital outlay database; when the operation needed a
7 designation, then Senate Secretary Mike Baer suggested RALPH, an acronym that stood for
8 "Research Analysis for Louisiana Philosophies and Histories," a subtle tribute paid to the
9 analytical expertise of Ralph Perlman, and for many years, all of the Senate's computer
10 systems were simply known as R.A.L.P.H.; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1988, Mr. Perlman became the special assistant for finance under
12 three gubernatorial administrations, governors Roemer, Edwards, and Foster; he was also
13 appointed by Governor Mike Foster to become secretary of the Louisiana Gaming Control
14 Board where he served from 1997 until 2002; and

15 WHEREAS, in 2002, he became a special assistant to the University of Louisiana
16 System President Sally Clausen, who remembered Ralph Perlman with fond affection as a
17 "magician in common sense" tempered with honesty and great diligence; and

18 WHEREAS, after retirement Ralph Perlman relished his leisure time and took great
19 pleasure in spoiling his grandchildren, who referred to him lovingly as, "Honey"; and

20 WHEREAS, in 2011, Mr. Perlman was proudly inducted into the Louisiana Political
21 Hall of Fame; and

22 WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman is survived by his devoted wife of twenty-nine years,
23 Billie Perlman, a son, Jerry Perlman, a daughter, Ann Mitchell, numerous grandchildren and
24 great-grandchildren, and a host of close friends; and

25 WHEREAS, Ralph Perlman was an extraordinary man of copious achievements, a
26 man of great intellect, a caring individual who has left an indelible mark on the fiscal
27 controls and budgetary procedures that state government exercises today.

28 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
29 express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the passing of Ralph Perlman, former State
30 Budget Director, and does hereby commend his significant contributions to state

1 government, his commitment to budgetary excellence, his friendship, his leadership, and the
2 able assistance that he so generously imparted to all who worked with him.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
4 recollect his forty years of invaluable public service in state government and does hereby
5 commemorate the rich legacy that he leaves to the benefit of future generations.

6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to his
7 widow, Mrs. Billie Perlman.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Susan P. Montague.

DIGEST

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SCR No. 130

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