

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 138

BY SENATOR WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To commend J. Ruth Kennedy upon her retirement after thirty-seven years of service to the citizens of Louisiana at the Louisiana Department of Health.

WHEREAS, Ruth Kennedy is a graduate of Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kennedy began her Medicaid career working in a field eligibility office and has held several other positions within Louisiana's Medicaid program such as Medicaid Deputy Director, CHIP Director, Bayou Health Project Manager, and Louisiana's Medicaid Director; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1998, Ruth was responsible for the implementation and oversight of the outreach, enrollment, retention, eligibility simplification, and organizational change efforts that resulted in Louisiana's dramatic reduction in the percentage of uninsured children; and

WHEREAS, Ruth Kennedy directed the design, development, and implementation of then Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals' transformational Medicaid managed care initiative, Bayou Health; and

WHEREAS, in the implementation of the successful Louisiana Medicaid managed care program, Ruth reviewed Medicaid managed care programs in more than two dozen states and worked with staff to develop the best possible model for Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, Bayou Health and now Healthy Louisiana has brought access to quality healthcare to millions of Louisiana residents with the Medicaid managed care organizations in reporting year 2016 having substantial improvements on 20 of 22 HEDIS performing metrics, and performing above the South Central 50th percentile on 11 of those 22 HEDIS performance metrics; and

WHEREAS, Medicaid managed care has saved the state taxpayers over four hundred plus million dollars annually when compared to the costs of fee for services; and

WHEREAS, Ruth has been a recipient of numerous awards and accolades for her work, such as the Charles E. Dunbar Jr. Career Service Award (given to an individual employed in state, municipal, or local classified service in recognition of exemplary service, commitment to classified service, contributions to improvement in the workplace and volunteer community activities) and the Louisiana Jimmie Davis Sunshine Award (recognizes a public servant who brings "sunshine" into the lives of Louisiana); and

WHEREAS, upon the executive order of Governor John Bel Edwards, the state of Louisiana expanded Medicaid eligibility, and Ms. Kennedy was charged with the enrollment which has been a resounding success with approximately 418,000 individuals enrolled as of April 17, 2017; and

WHEREAS, Ruth's innovative processes for enrollment with the Medicaid Expansion has been nationally recognized and has become a model for other states and only added to her reputation across America as an expert in Medicaid and CHIP; and

WHEREAS, J. Ruth Kennedy will successfully retire after tirelessly serving not only the most vulnerable citizens of our state but all citizens of our state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend J. Ruth Kennedy upon her retirement after thirty-seven years of service with the Louisiana Department of Health and does hereby express sincere hopes and prayers for a long and happy retirement.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Ruth Kennedy.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE