

2017 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 196

BY SENATOR MILKOVICH

COMMENDATIONS. Commends Reverend Fred Luter Jr. on his service to the members of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church and to Southern Baptists across the nation.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend Reverend Fred Luter Jr. on his service to the members of the Franklin Avenue
3 Baptist Church and to Southern Baptists across the nation.

4 WHEREAS, Reverend Luter was born on November 11, 1956, in the Lower Ninth
5 Ward of New Orleans, Louisiana; and

6 WHEREAS, Fred Luter began his ministerial journey with what he describes as his
7 "Damascus road experience", referring to a motorcycle accident in 1977 when he was
8 twenty-one years old, in which he was seriously injured and after which he made a conscious
9 decision to surrender his life entirely to Jesus Christ; and

10 WHEREAS, after his recovery from the accident, he preached every Saturday on the
11 street corner of Galvez Street and Caffin Avenue in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans,
12 where he spread the gospel to all who would listen; and

13 WHEREAS, as word of his preaching reached a broader audience, he was invited to
14 preach in Baptist churches across the city and in 1983 he preached his first sermon at the
15 Law Street Baptist Church; and

16 WHEREAS, in September 1986, the small but faithful sixty-five members of
17 Franklin Avenue Baptist Church elected Fred Luter as their pastor at the age of thirty, and
18 Reverend Luter was humbled and honored to serve this church as his first pastorate; and

1 WHEREAS, at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, Reverend Luter committed himself
2 to encourage the people by teaching and living the word of God, and he purposefully sought
3 ways to draw men into the church, believing if you save the man, the man will save his
4 family; and

5 WHEREAS, in a mere three years, the membership of Franklin Avenue Baptist
6 Church grew to three hundred and by 1994 the congregation had outgrown its current
7 sanctuary; and

8 WHEREAS, Pastor Luter challenged the congregation to increase its tithes in order
9 to support the building of a larger sanctuary, which became a reality when in 1997, the
10 members of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church moved into an eighteen hundred seat sanctuary
11 and by 2005, the church had grown to seven thousand members; and

12 WHEREAS, another capital campaign was necessary to accommodate the
13 burgeoning congregation and Pastor Luter's vision for a forty-five hundred seat sanctuary,
14 naming the capital campaign, "Committed to Changing More Lives"; and

15 WHEREAS, the destruction wrought by Hurricane Katrina in 2005 included the
16 near-complete destruction of the church building of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church and
17 scattered its parishioners across the country, but Pastor Luter's commitment to his flock
18 required that he hold services for those still in New Orleans so he arranged for Franklin
19 Avenue's parishioners to hold morning worship services across town, at the First Baptist
20 Church, until the sanctuary could be repaired; and

21 WHEREAS, Pastor Luter also traveled to Houston, Texas, and Baton Rouge,
22 Louisiana, to bring the holy word to those who had lost everything, except their faith, in an
23 effort to encourage parishioners to return to the nearly ruined city; and

24 WHEREAS, by April 2008, less than three years after the near total devastation of
25 Hurricane Katrina, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, its pastor, and congregation were at
26 home once again in the new church, built upon the ruins of their beloved sanctuary; and

27 WHEREAS, leaders in the Southern Baptist Convention were aware of the
28 phenomenal efforts of Pastor Luter and the success he and his congregation experienced in
29 bringing their church and its parishioners back to their roots on Franklin Avenue; and

30 WHEREAS, in 2011, Reverend Luter was elected at the Southern Baptist Convention

1 to serve as the denomination's first African-American vice president and in 2012, he was the
2 only candidate on the ballot for the presidency of the Southern Baptist Convention, a turning
3 point for the predominately Caucasian Protestant church, particularly one that had been
4 founded by pro-slavery Baptists in 1845; and

5 WHEREAS, in 2014, Pastor Luter stepped down as president of the denomination
6 after serving two terms as its president; and

7 WHEREAS, Pastor Luter traveled this path with the loving support and influence of
8 his wife, Elizabeth; their children, Kimberly Luter Terrell and husband, Howard, and Fred
9 "Chip" Luter III and his wife, Jasmine; and grandchildren, who have all brought joy and
10 gladness into his life; and

11 WHEREAS, Reverend Fred Luter Jr., beginning his ministry with only his faith to
12 guide him, built a substantial Baptist congregation in New Orleans before Hurricane Katrina,
13 re-established that congregation and re-built its sanctuary in less than three years after the
14 storm, and became the first African-American vice president and then president of the
15 Southern Baptist Convention, which stood as testament to the future and to the resilience of
16 the people of God and of their faith in him, and, perhaps, His faith in them, certainly in
17 Senior Pastor Luter.

18 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
19 does hereby commend Reverend Fred Luter Jr. on his service to the members of the Franklin
20 Avenue Baptist Church and to Southern Baptists across the nation.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to
22 Reverend Fred Luter Jr. in care of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, New Orleans, Louisiana.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

SR 196 Original

DIGEST
2017 Regular Session

Milkovich

Commends Reverend Fred Luter Jr. on his service to the members of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church and to Southern Baptists across the nation.