

2023 Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 15

BY REPRESENTATIVE DAVIS

COMMENDATIONS: Commends the Louisiana Art & Science Museum on the twentieth anniversary of its Irene W. Pennington Planetarium

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend the Louisiana Art & Science Museum (LASM) on the occasion of the
3 twentieth anniversary of its Irene W. Pennington Planetarium.

4 WHEREAS, in 1967, the city-parish of Baton Rouge and The Committee for a Better
5 Baton Rouge funded the construction of a Zeiss planetarium to complement the then-named
6 Louisiana Arts and Science Center (LASC) that was housed in the Old Governor's Mansion;
7 and

8 WHEREAS, in 1971, the International Planetarium Society (IPS) drafted its
9 constitution and bylaws in the LASC planetarium, which was the twelfth-largest planetarium
10 in the world at the time; and

11 WHEREAS, in 1998, the LASM entered into an agreement with the state of
12 Louisiana and the city-parish of Baton Rouge to fund a \$16.8 million project to build a
13 planetarium, atrium, educational classrooms, and galleries at the museum's current location;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, in 1999, the Irene W. and C. B. Pennington Foundation funded an
16 endowment to support the operations of the planetarium; in 2001, ExxonMobil contributed
17 to the planetarium the largest single educational donation the corporation had ever made to
18 the Baton Rouge community; and

19 WHEREAS, on May 22, 2003, the Louisiana Art & Science Museum officially
20 opened the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium and ExxonMobil Space Theater; the
21 planetarium, with its sixty-foot dome and one hundred seventy-one seat theater, remains the

1 largest and most technologically advanced planetarium in the southeastern United States;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, the LASM's economic impact on Baton Rouge grew significantly as a
4 result of the opening of the new Irene W. Pennington Planetarium; the planetarium caused
5 the average daily attendance at the LASM to quadruple, which also led to the doubling of
6 the museum's operating budget; the state-of-the-art planetarium draws not only community
7 members and tourists, but also tens of thousands of students seeking to add to their school
8 field trip experience; and

9 WHEREAS, in 2012, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium hosted the IPS's twenty-
10 first biennial conference, which brought nearly seven hundred planetarium professionals
11 from forty-four countries to Baton Rouge; and

12 WHEREAS, in 2020, the LASM survived the COVID-19 pandemic; during the
13 height of the pandemic, the planetarium brightened the lives of hundreds of individuals
14 through weekly online livestreams of the "We Need Our Space" planetarium experience,
15 which was provided to patrons entirely free of charge in the safety of their homes; and

16 WHEREAS, in 2021, the LASM presented "Astronomy Virtual Voyages" to more
17 than twelve hundred fifth-grade students from struggling schools within the East Baton
18 Rouge Parish School System; the program featured live, presenter-led explorations of the
19 nighttime sky and other hands-on activities; and

20 WHEREAS, this year, the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium celebrated a landmark
21 occasion by admitting its one-millionth visitor; many of those visitors have been students
22 from nearly forty Louisiana parishes and five Mississippi counties, all of whom experience
23 curriculum-aligned educational programs that are focused on not only astronomy, but also
24 important topics such as engineering, history, culture, and the environment; and

25 WHEREAS, the LASM is also celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the Irene W.
26 Pennington Planetarium by lighting the exterior of the planetarium dome on May 26, 2023,
27 and presenting an "Out of this World" themed gala on October 6, 2023; to raise funds for the
28 museum's capital campaign to renovate four of the LASM's hands-on, STEAM-based spaces;
29 and

1 WHEREAS, in 2025, the LASM will celebrate the one-hundredth anniversary of its
2 historic building, which is the renovated Illinois Central Railroad passenger station built in
3 1925 by the Yazoo and Mississippi Valley Railroad Company which has been listed on the
4 National Register of Historic Places since 1994; and

5 WHEREAS, both the LASM and the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium are most
6 deserving of the highest recognition on the occasion of the planetarium's twentieth
7 anniversary.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the
9 Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the Louisiana Art & Science Museum on the
10 occasion of the twentieth anniversary of its Irene W. Pennington Planetarium; does hereby
11 recognize the Irene W. Pennington Planetarium's pivotal role in advancing Louisiana's
12 educational, cultural, and economic development by providing opportunities to learn,
13 explore, and discover under its awe-inspiring, sixty-foot dome; and does hereby extend
14 sincerest wishes that the LASM continue to receive the necessary support to continue its
15 truly inspiring mission of education.

16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the
17 chair of the board, Elizabeth Canfield, and the executive director of the Louisiana Art &
18 Science Museum.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HR 15 Original

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Commends the La. Art & Science Museum on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of its Irene W. Pennington Planetarium.