

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 181

BY SENATOR STINE

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI) on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary for its outstanding service to Louisiana's business community, promoting free enterprise, and fostering a climate for economic growth through engagement in the political, legislative, judicial, and regulatory processes.

WHEREAS, LABI is widely regarded as Louisiana's premier business lobbying organization, and celebrates its fiftieth anniversary in 2025; and

WHEREAS, LABI was established on September 4, 1975, by consolidating the Louisiana State Chamber of Commerce, the Louisiana Manufacturers Association, and the Louisiana Political Council, uniting their memberships, resources, and staff; and

WHEREAS, LABI's board of directors selected then executive director of the Public Affairs Research Council, Ed Steimel, to lead the organization as its first president; and

WHEREAS, the organization's first major task was the herculean challenge of seeking enactment of a Right-to-Work law, an effort many political observers at the time predicted would take years to achieve, yet LABI on its first attempt spearheaded and obtained the successful passage of that law; and

WHEREAS, during the latter half of the 1970s, LABI sought to build on this success by expanding its advocacy efforts on issues important to the business community, particularly in the areas of labor and taxation law, and began engaging in legislative elections; and

WHEREAS, on three separate occasions when the state's unemployment compensation trust fund became insolvent, LABI played a leadership role in working with the legislature and governor to address the fund's collapse and restoration, preventing a major federal tax increase for Louisiana's businesses in each instance; the first being in the 1980s when massive layoffs in Louisiana's oil and gas sector created an \$800 million obligation to the federal unemployment system for loans used to pay benefits; the second

occurring after Hurricane Katrina in 2005, which caused the dislocation of workers and their employers in the New Orleans region, generating a federal debt exceeding \$400 million; and finally, in 2020 when the COVID-19 outbreak shut down commerce across the country and forced Louisiana's fund once again into insolvency, resulting in close to \$200 million in federal debt; and

WHEREAS, upon Steimel's retirement in 1988, Dan Juneau succeeded him as LABI's president; and

WHEREAS, under Juneau's leadership, LABI invested effort in education, championing accountability and choice in addition to helping to create the Community and Technical College System, while developing and bringing about the passage of bills that served to restore an eroding workers' compensation insurance market, as well as those that brought about major legal reform, and finally promoting a reorganization of Louisiana's workforce delivery system to better connect employers and prospective employees; and

WHEREAS, in 2013, Stephen Waguespack became LABI president following Juneau's retirement; and

WHEREAS, under Waguespack's leadership, LABI defended businesses against numerous and perennial attacks on labor, legal, and taxation fronts, all while playing a pivotal role in the enactment of significant legal and educational improvements; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, following Waguespack's departure, Will Green was appointed as his successor; and

WHEREAS, under Green's leadership, LABI has honored its legacy while strategically focusing on the future through the implementation of its LA Driven Strategic Plan to advance a vibrant and sustainable business climate in Louisiana by championing free enterprise to create economic opportunities and enhance the quality of life for all citizens; and

WHEREAS, LABI has diligently protected Louisiana's businesses against unwarranted governmental disruption to their ability to operate efficiently and productively; and

WHEREAS, many LABI alumni staff members have continued their careers working within Louisiana's governmental processes to improve our state; and

WHEREAS, LABI has earned numerous awards and national recognition for its work in Louisiana and its leadership in service to other chambers of commerce and manufacturing associations across the United States, in collaboration with its national partners the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers; and

WHEREAS, for fifty years LABI has served as an able and effective advocate for its members and non-members within Louisiana's business community; those of all sizes, from all business and industry sectors, and from all around the state; and

WHEREAS, for five decades, LABI has annually been in the forefront of efforts to improve Louisiana's business environment by advocating for the reformation and stabilization of the state's budget and tax systems, correcting inequities in its civil justice system, strengthening its energy sector, enhancing its education and training delivery and outcomes, safeguarding employers' ability to provide employment opportunities for workers, and advocating on so many other issues too numerous to recite in this Resolution, all for the purpose of promoting business investment and job growth within our state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend its sincere congratulations and best wishes to the Louisiana Association of Business and Industry on the occasion of its fiftieth anniversary and commends its five decades of outstanding service and accomplishments in support of the state of Louisiana and its business community.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr. Will Green, President of LABI.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE