

2026 Regular Session

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 130

BY SENATOR BOUDREAUX

COMMENDATIONS. Commends E. Joseph Savoie for his distinguished career in higher education and extends best wishes upon the occasion of his well-deserved retirement.

1 A RESOLUTION

2 To commend Dr. E. Joseph Savoie for nearly five decades of exemplary public service,
3 visionary leadership, and extraordinary contributions to higher education in
4 Louisiana and to recognize his well-deserved retirement as president of the
5 University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

6 WHEREAS, Dr. E. Joseph Savoie, a native of Sulphur, Louisiana, has devoted his
7 life and career to advancing educational excellence, expanding opportunity, and
8 strengthening the future of Louisiana through higher education; and

9 WHEREAS, Dr. Savoie began his academic journey at the University of Louisiana
10 at Lafayette (UL Lafayette), where he earned both bachelor's and master's degrees, becoming
11 a proud two-time alumnus of the institution he would later lead to unprecedented levels of
12 achievement and national recognition; and

13 WHEREAS, his distinguished career in higher education began at UL Lafayette,
14 where he served with dedication and distinction in numerous leadership capacities, including
15 as its first vice president for University Advancement, executive director of the Alumni
16 Association, program director for the Union Program Council, student government adviser,
17 and adjunct assistant professor, demonstrating his exceptional ability to inspire students,
18 cultivate leadership, and advance institutional growth; and

1 WHEREAS, after earning a doctorate in educational leadership and administration
2 from Teacher's College, Columbia University, Dr. Savoie was appointed in 1995 by
3 Governor-elect M.J. "Mike" Foster to serve on his higher education transition team and, in
4 1996, the Board of Regents selected Dr. Savoie to serve as interim commissioner of higher
5 education; and

6 WHEREAS, though initially intended to be temporary, Dr. Savoie's remarkable
7 leadership, strategic vision, and unwavering commitment to educational excellence quickly
8 earned the confidence and admiration of state leaders, prompting the Board of Regents to
9 appoint him permanently to the state's highest postsecondary education office; and

10 WHEREAS, Dr. Savoie served with extraordinary distinction as Louisiana
11 commissioner of higher education for twelve years under three gubernatorial
12 administrations, where he became widely respected as a consensus builder, reformer, and
13 champion for students and institutions across the state; and

14 WHEREAS, during his tenure as commissioner, Dr. Savoie played an instrumental
15 role in reshaping and modernizing Louisiana's higher education landscape through
16 transformative reforms, including restructuring higher education governance, creating the
17 Louisiana Community and Technical College System, strengthening teacher education
18 programs, securing full funding for the higher education formula, championing student
19 retention and completion in the wake of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and establishing
20 Louisiana's first statewide needs-based financial aid program, thereby expanding educational
21 access and opportunity for countless students and families; and

22 WHEREAS, former Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco aptly described Dr.
23 Savoie as "the commissioner who has had the most positive influence on all of education in
24 Louisiana," reflecting the profound and lasting impact of his leadership upon the state's
25 educational system; and

26 WHEREAS, in 2008, following the retirement announcement of longtime UL
27 Lafayette President Dr. Ray P. Authement, Dr. Savoie sought the opportunity to return to his
28 alma mater and continue its legacy of excellence, bringing with him unmatched statewide
29 experience, national perspective, and a deep and abiding love for UL Lafayette; and

30 WHEREAS, the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors selected Dr.

1 Savoie to serve as UL Lafayette's sixth president, and on July 2, 2008, he began a historic
2 tenure defined by innovation, strategic growth, academic excellence, and transformational
3 achievement; and

4 WHEREAS, under Dr. Savoie's visionary leadership, UL Lafayette experienced
5 unprecedented advancement and emerged as one of the nation's premier public research
6 universities, earning the prestigious Carnegie R1 classification and placing UL Lafayette
7 among the top tier of research institutions in the United States; and

8 WHEREAS, during his presidency, Dr. Savoie led transformative investments in
9 research and development, resulting in research expenditures increasing by nearly two
10 hundred percent between 2014 and 2021, while also overseeing significant campus
11 expansion and modernization through the construction of new academic buildings, residence
12 halls, research laboratories, athletic and student-centered facilities, as well as the acquisition
13 and development of UL Lafayette's Health Sciences Campus; and

14 WHEREAS, Dr. Savoie championed academic innovation and workforce
15 development through the expansion of undergraduate and graduate degree programs
16 designed to meet the evolving needs of Louisiana's economy and global society, while also
17 fostering stronger partnerships between UL Lafayette and the surrounding community; and

18 WHEREAS, in the years following 2020, UL Lafayette achieved record enrollment
19 in undergraduate and graduate programs, reflecting the growing national reputation of the
20 institution and the success of Dr. Savoie's steadfast commitment to student achievement,
21 academic excellence, and institutional advancement; and

22 WHEREAS, Dr. Savoie devoted thirty-five years of service to the University of
23 Louisiana at Lafayette, including seventeen transformative years as president, and in
24 recognition of his extraordinary leadership, enduring contributions, and unwavering
25 dedication to the institution, the University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors
26 conferred upon him the title of president emeritus upon his retirement; and

27 WHEREAS, throughout his distinguished career, Dr. E. Joseph Savoie has
28 exemplified integrity, humility, wisdom, and servant leadership, leaving an indelible mark
29 upon higher education in Louisiana and inspiring generations of students, educators,
30 administrators, and public servants through his tireless dedication and extraordinary

1 accomplishments; and

2 WHEREAS, Dr. Savoie's legacy will endure not only through the institutions he
3 strengthened and the reforms he championed, but also through the countless lives he
4 influenced and the enduring belief that education remains one of the most powerful forces
5 for opportunity, progress, and public good.

6 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana
7 does hereby commend Dr. E. Joseph Savoie on the occasion of his retirement for his
8 exemplary and selfless public service, visionary leadership, and extraordinary contributions
9 to higher education in Louisiana spanning nearly five decades; does hereby express profound
10 gratitude for his enduring commitment to the students, institutions, and residents of this
11 state; and does hereby extend sincerest wishes for continued happiness, health, and success
12 in all of his future endeavors.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Dr.
14 E. Joseph Savoie.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Senate Legislative Services. The keyword, summary, 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)]

DIGEST

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