

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 184

BY SENATORS BOUDREAUX, BARROW, BARTHELEMY, CARTER, DUPLESSIS,  
HARRIS, JACKSON-ANDREWS, JENKINS, LUNEAU, PRICE AND  
SELDERS

A RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate the Honorable Foster L. Campbell Jr. on the occasion of fifty years of continuous elective service to the state of Louisiana, first as a state senator and currently as Public Service Commissioner.

WHEREAS, Foster L. Campbell Jr. was born on January 6, 1947, in Shreveport, Louisiana, and raised in Bossier Parish, where he developed the deep connection to rural communities that would shape his public career; and

WHEREAS, he graduated from Bossier High School, attended Louisiana State University, and earned a bachelor's degree in business and economics from Northwestern State University; and

WHEREAS, Foster was a proud member of the Kappa Sigma fraternity at both LSU and Northwestern, forming lifelong bonds with many fraternity brothers who would later serve alongside him in elected office; and

WHEREAS, before entering public office, he worked as a schoolteacher at Plain Dealing High School and Haughton High School in Bossier Parish, while also selling agricultural products to support his young family; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, at the age of twenty-eight, Foster qualified for the open seat in Senate District 36; and

WHEREAS, he led a crowded field in the primary and then defeated former Speaker of the House John Sidney Garrett in the runoff, becoming one of the youngest state senators in Louisiana history; and

WHEREAS, he was sworn into office on May 10, 1976, beginning a distinguished twenty-seven year tenure representing Senate District 36; and

WHEREAS, during his Senate service, he tirelessly championed legislation regulating rural electric cooperatives, resulting in lower utility rates for approximately one

million Louisiana residents; and

WHEREAS, he authored the legislation creating the Bossier Education Excellence Fund (B.E.E.F.), a permanent trust fund supported by gaming revenue that has provided millions of dollars for public education in Bossier Parish; and

WHEREAS, Foster authored Louisiana's "Do Not Call" law, establishing one of the state's most significant consumer-protection measures and shielding residents from unwanted telemarketing practices; and

WHEREAS, he also authored the legislation creating the "Save the Louisiana Black Bear" license plate, raising funds and otherwise providing state support to programs resulting in recovery of the Louisiana Black Bear populations and its removal from the federal Endangered Species List; and

WHEREAS, though not a prolific bill filer, Foster authored impactful legislation addressing issues such as railroad-crossing safety, regulation of payday lenders, recognition of the Catahoula Cur as the state dog, restriction of billboards along rural portions of Interstate Highway 49, establishment of Youth Hunting Days, and creation of the Educational Excellence Fund from tobacco settlement proceeds; and

WHEREAS, he is best known for his proposed oil and gas processing tax, which Foster argued could provide sufficient revenue to allow elimination of the state income tax while increasing funding for education and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, Foster served multiple terms as chairman of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, Aquaculture, and Rural Development, served multiple terms on the Senate Committee on Finance, and chaired select committees on rural electric cooperatives and consumer affairs, among others; and

WHEREAS, he was widely known for his unmatched oratory skills and his memorable call to colleagues, "Come on home, y'all, it's suppertime", as a nod to his friend, Governor Jimmie Davis, before launching into stemwinders that featured stories from his childhood selling watermelons, changing tires at his father's service station, or reflections on how his controversial bills kept lobbyists employed and wealthy; and

WHEREAS, in 2002, after a hard-fought campaign against a popular eighteen-year incumbent, Foster was elected to the Louisiana Public Service Commission, where he has

served for more than two decades, representing almost one million Louisianians across twenty-four parishes in North Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, upon assuming the commissionership on January 1, 2003, he urged his fellow commissioners to adopt long-overdue reforms, including holding meetings around the state, prohibiting commissioners' relatives from representing regulated utilities, and ending the practice of utility lobbyists providing free meals and gifts to commissioners and staff; and

WHEREAS, after several years of heated debate, Foster convinced the commission to abolish an anti-competitive and archaic nineteenth-century rule known as "public convenience and necessity", which had allowed existing trucking companies to dictate the terms under which potential competitors could haul regulated waste; and

WHEREAS, he fought valiantly on behalf of relatives of Louisiana inmates to reduce the cost of prison telephone calls, which were among the highest in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Foster led the effort to bring telephone service to the remote community of Mink, Louisiana, ending its inhabitants' decades of isolation and fulfilling his commitment to rural infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, following Hurricane Katrina, by personally reaching out to the chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, Foster secured thirty-nine million dollars in federal funding to provide free cell phones to evacuees, ensuring displaced residents could communicate with family, employers, and relief agencies; and

WHEREAS, he has consistently advocated for policies protecting vulnerable residents, including measures to prevent utility disconnections during extreme weather and to waive utility deposits for survivors of domestic violence; and

WHEREAS, throughout his fifty years in elected office, Foster has been recognized for his steadfast advocacy for rural communities, his commitment to consumer fairness, his plainspoken, and dedication to improving the quality of life for Louisiana citizens; and

WHEREAS, Foster's 1975 campaign slogan, "Works hard, talks straight, makes sense", has continued to epitomize his life of public service; and

WHEREAS, he is an inductee of the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame and a recipient of the Louisiana Democratic Party's Lifetime Achievement Award; and

WHEREAS, having been sworn in as a state senator during the nation's Bicentennial year of 1976 and, due only to term limits, leaving the Public Service Commission at the end of this Sesquicentennial year, Foster will have served in elected public office for a full twenty percent of America's history; and

WHEREAS, it is entirely fitting and proper for the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana to honor one of its own, whose career reflects exceptional longevity, public commitment, and unwavering service to the people of this state.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate Foster L. Campbell Jr. on the occasion of fifty years of continuous elective service to the state of Louisiana, first as state senator and currently as Public Service Commissioner.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to former state senator and current public service commissioner, the Honorable Foster L. Campbell Jr.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE