

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 74

BY SENATOR PETERSON

A RESOLUTION

To recognize and celebrate the 2016 Elks Grand Lodge Convention Local Committee of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order Elks of the World (IBPOEW) 117th Elks Grand Lodge and 113th Grand Temple Daughters of Elks International Convention to be held on August 13, 2016, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana recognizes the convention to be held on August 13, 2016, honoring the 2016 Elks Grand Lodge Committee of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order Elks of the World (IBPOEW) 117th Elks Grand Lodge and 113th Grand Temple Daughters of Elks International Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, fraternal organizations are popular among African Americans for the same reasons they prove to be popular among all Americans: by providing financial, spiritual, and emotional aid, and they are all invaluable to the communities they serve; and

WHEREAS, African American fraternities have played a vital role in the African American experience and have had the added purpose of improving self-esteem; first instituted during slavery, the membership, rituals, uniforms, and offices of these societies generated a respect not available outside of the lodges at the time; they have always been fully committed to economic, personal, and academic advancement; and

WHEREAS, one organization is the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks of the World (IBPOEW), granted a copyright as an organization on September 28, 1898, in Cincinnati, Ohio, and currently boasts over half a million members in over one thousand five hundred lodges worldwide; and

WHEREAS, on June 13, 1902, Emma Virginia Kelley organized the Daughters of Elks in Norfolk, Virginia; this group was later adopted by the Grand Lodge and became an auxiliary body to the Brothers of Elks, the first Temple was Norfolk Temple No. 1, Norfolk, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, a pullman porter, Arthur James Riggs, and Benjamin Franklin Howard, both members of another fraternal organization for people of color, realized their dreams and plans when the first lodge, Alpha Lodge No. 1, was organized in Cincinnati, as a result of the efforts of these two men; and

WHEREAS, today it is the largest black fraternal organization in the world and its stated purpose is that the welfare and happiness of its members be promoted and enhanced, that nobleness of soul and goodness of heart be cultivated, that the principles of charity, justice, brotherly/sisterly love and fidelity be inculcated, that its members and their families be assisted and protected, and that the spirit of patriotism be enlivened and exalted; and

WHEREAS, the order is best known for its education department, which over the years has given millions of dollars in scholarships to youth of all races, and has conducted annual oratorical contests, held on local, state, regional, and national levels which throughout its history have included many notables, such as Justice Thurgood Marshall, McDonald Henry, the former Ambassador to the United Nations, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a Nobel Peace Prize winner, Mary Beth Bethune, Dr. Benjamin Hooks and Oprah Winfrey, author, actress/producer, media proprietor, talk show host, and philanthropist; and

WHEREAS, a few of the major departments of the Elks are the Grand Lodge education department, history department, medical department, veterans affairs department, national youth department, civil department, and through the efforts of its members and various departments, the Elks sponsor extensive educational scholarship programs, youth summer computer literacy camps, and help children with special needs, with parades and with unequalled community service activities throughout the world; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of our communities, and the overall vitality of American society depend in great measure upon organizations like these.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize and celebrate the 2016 Elks Grand Lodge Convention Local Committee of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order Elks of the World (IBPOEW) 117th Elks Grand Lodge and 113th Grand Temple Daughters of Elks International Convention to be held on August 13, 2016, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Elks Grand Lodge Convention Local Committee of the Improved Benevolent and Protective Order for the Elks International Convention.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE