

2016 Regular Session

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 144

BY SENATOR JOHN SMITH

COMMENDATIONS. Commends Fort Polk Heritage Families and the Heritage Family Association on their 10th year anniversary celebration of the Heritage Family Day Reunion.

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

2 To commend the Fort Polk Heritage Families and the Heritage Family Association on the
3 occasion of the tenth anniversary celebration of the Heritage Family Day Reunion.

4 WHEREAS, between 1940 and 1945, the United States War Department, now the
5 Department of Defense, took possession of privately owned land in Vernon Parish,
6 displacing more than six hundred families and over three thousand people from their
7 homesteads, livestock, and the graves of cherished loved ones, and they were faced with
8 building their lives anew; and

9 WHEREAS, a portion of the property was condemned and the land acquired through
10 the powers of expropriation and eminent domain, powers allowing states and governments
11 to seize private land for government or public use, as the threat of a looming world war
12 necessitated the building and improving of military bases and airfields; and

13 WHEREAS, the Fort Polk heritage families occupied land that is currently the site
14 for the Fort Polk Army Installation and Peason Ridge artillery training range; and

15 WHEREAS, in April 2007, the leaders of the United States Army Joint Readiness
16 Training Center for Fort Polk became concerned about the potential risk of losing an aspect
17 of American history by failing to preserve the stories of these families who were uprooted
18 and dispersed throughout the country; and

1 WHEREAS, the Joint Readiness Training Center convened a cultural resources
2 workshop to develop plans for preserving the rich cultural heritage of these families, their
3 ancestors, and their descendants; and

4 WHEREAS, from that workshop and with the plans having been developed, the
5 Heritage Collection Project proceeded, beginning with the original settlement of the area in
6 the 1820s through the resettlement that took place in the first half of the 1940s as the country
7 readied for world war; and

8 WHEREAS, the Heritage Family Collection of Fort Polk's displaced families was
9 created and it was determined that the collection would be housed in the Fort Polk
10 archeological curation facility and a second copy of the items in the collection would be
11 lodged at the Northwestern State University archives in Natchitoches, Louisiana, where all
12 the items are preserved and many are available to the public; and

13 WHEREAS, a portion of the collection is currently available online and this
14 compilation of photographs, documents, and firsthand accounts have contributed to the
15 important historical record; and

16 WHEREAS, the Louisiana Region Two Folklife Center at Northwestern State
17 University has conducted oral interviews to include in the collection and research material,
18 such as conveyance records, marriage licenses, and death notices, all public records, and
19 have been added to the documents and records donated by the heritage families; and

20 WHEREAS, the resilience and determination of the subsistence farmers who were
21 resettled from Fort Polk came from a strong faith and a belief in the importance of family,
22 both values which have been exhibited by their ancestors who have committed both time and
23 energy to the Heritage Family Association and the compilation of the collection; and

24 WHEREAS, these heritage families have continued to display their dedication to
25 their community and their country and, to date, there have been more than two hundred
26 members of those families who have served in this nation's armed forces; and

27 WHEREAS, the integrity and cultural richness of the collection is greatly dependent
28 upon the interest and contributions of the heritage families and their commitment to the
29 history and heritage of Fort Polk and Vernon Parish; and

30 WHEREAS, the Fort Polk Heritage Families and the Heritage Family Association

1 can be proud of the contribution they have made to maintaining the history of the sacrifices
2 made by the families who were displaced from their homes and their very roots and allowing
3 these sacrifices to be honored through the annual celebration of the Heritage Family Day
4 Reunion; and

5 WHEREAS, Fort Polk and the Joint Readiness Training Facility created a Heritage
6 Family Day Reunion to recognize, honor, and memorialize these families, and the first event
7 was held in November 2007, and the tenth annual event will be celebrated later this year.

8 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby
9 commend the Fort Polk Heritage Families and the Heritage Family Association on the
10 occasion of the tenth anniversary celebration of the Heritage Family Day Reunion.

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Mr.
12 Gene Haymon, a representative of the association.

The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part
of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Mary Dozier O'Brien.

	DIGEST	
SCR 144 Original	2016 Regular Session	John Smith

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