

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 17

BY SENATOR PETERSON

A RESOLUTION

To express the sincere condolences of the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana upon the death of Felicia Kahn.

WHEREAS, it is with deep regret and profound sorrow that the citizens of Louisiana learned of the death of Felicia Kahn, a local legend in political circles and the civil rights and women's advocacy movements, at the age of ninety-one; and

WHEREAS, Felicia Schornstein Kahn was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, to Richard and Sarah Schornstein on July 11, 1926; and

WHEREAS, she attended Isidore Newman School and graduated from Newcomb College in 1948; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kahn had several professors who were interested in political action in the Democratic Party, and she joined the organization, casting her first ballot for Harry Truman; and

WHEREAS, in her senior year at Newcomb College, she met Martha Robinson who was on the campus looking for students to join the League of Women Voters New Orleans (LWVNO); and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kahn joined the group and assisted in registering women to vote and raising voter awareness; and

WHEREAS, soon after graduating from college in 1948, she married Charles Kahn Jr. and began working as a client visitor with the Louisiana Department of Public Welfare, but she quit working to start a family; and

WHEREAS, pushing her son, Chip, in a stroller, Ms. Kahn campaigned for Mayor Chep Morrison and for Ms. Robinson, then a candidate for New Orleans City Council; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Kahn found her passion with the LWVNO, and volunteering with the organization gave her a solid background in all the important issues of the day and introduced her to New Orleans' first wave of women political leaders, including Mathilde

Dreyfous, Betty Wisdom, Margaret "Pokey" McIlhenny, Carolyn Gay "Blondie" Labouisse, Mildred Osborne, and Marion Abramson; and

WHEREAS, often with a toddler on her knee, she served the organization in many capacities, including president from 1966 to 1969, and became a frequent visitor of newsrooms pushing for coverage and traveling to Baton Rouge to lobby the legislature on issues such as voting, school integration, and poverty programs; and

WHEREAS, after leaving the LWNVO board in 1969, Ms. Kahn became active in many other organizations, including the New Orleans Coalition, the Independent Women's Organization, the National Women's Political Caucus, Common Cause, and the National Council of Jewish Women; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Ms. Kahn worked with the biracial National Women's Political Caucus to encourage women to attend the Democratic Convention and won a seat on the Democratic State Central Committee backed by Mayor Landrieu and the New Orleans Coalition; and

WHEREAS, in 1976, she joined Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign, was a Carter appointee to the convention's Rules Committee, began to meet people from around the country who thought differently about women's roles, and was a candidate in a race for the Louisiana Legislature; and

WHEREAS, from 1976 to 2016, Ms. Kahn was a delegate to five Democratic National Conventions for Jimmy Carter, Gary Hart, Bill Clinton, and twice for Hillary Clinton, and once as an alternate; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, she was one of the oldest delegates to the historic convention that elected Hillary Rodham Clinton to serve as the first woman presidential candidate of a major political party; and

WHEREAS, at the time of her passing, Ms. Kahn was serving as an elected member of the Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee representing District "B"; and

WHEREAS, Felicia Kahn spent a lifetime supporting Democratic ideals and was an integral part in promoting gender equality within the party; and

WHEREAS, she will be missed by her loving children, Charles "Chip" Kahn, Elizabeth Kahn, and Felicia "Taffy" Kahn; and

WHEREAS, her words sum up her lifetime of political activism best, "Women play an important role in society. It is absolutely essential that a woman be elected president. Electing male presidents every four years is just wrong. The people in charge of our country should look like the population. You can't really have representative government without true representation of the population."; and

WHEREAS, Felicia Kahn was a passionate feminist, political activist, and lifelong advocate of citizen education and social justice; and

WHEREAS, the success of the state of Louisiana, the strength of its communities, and the overall vitality of American society depend in great measure upon people like Felicia Kahn; and

WHEREAS, with the death of Felicia Kahn, Louisiana has lost one of its finest daughters, a quintessential southern lady who loved her community and whose accomplishments have left an indelible mark upon her community, state, and nation.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express sincere and heartfelt condolences upon the death of Felicia Kahn, records for posterity her outstanding achievements and contributions, and extends enduring appreciation for the tremendous pride and honor that she will forever bring to the Democratic Party, the New Orleans community, the state of Louisiana, and the United States of America.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the family of Felicia Kahn.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE