

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 219

BY SENATORS LONG, ALLAIN, APPEL, BARROW, BISHOP, BOUDREAUX, CARTER, CHABERT, CLAITOR, COLOMB, CORTEZ, DONAHUE, ERDEY, FANNIN, GATTI, HENSGENS, HEWITT, JOHNS, LAFLEUR, LAMBERT, LUNEAU, MARTINY, MILKOVICH, MILLS, MIZELL, MORRELL, MORRISH, PEACOCK, PETERSON, PRICE, RISER, GARY SMITH, JOHN SMITH, TARVER, THOMPSON, WALSWORTH, WARD AND WHITE

A RESOLUTION

To commend the Honorable John A. Alario Jr., Senate President, for his forty-eight years of exceptional public service to the state of Louisiana and especially the people of Jefferson Parish and Plaquemines Parish as a legislator and as a leader in both houses of the Legislature of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby express its deep appreciation to Senate President John Alario for his outstanding leadership, for his many contributions rendered to the constituency of Jefferson and Plaquemines parishes, and, in particular, his remarkable tenure as a distinguished and productive member of the Louisiana State Senate representing District 8 and in the Louisiana House of Representatives representing District 83; and

WHEREAS, having served a total of twelve consecutive terms, Senator Alario is the Dean of the Legislature of Louisiana with the most service time of any current legislator; and

WHEREAS, it is with immense strength of character, skill, intelligence, and sense of decorum that John Alario has been elected by his colleagues to preside twice as Speaker of the House of Representatives and twice as President of the Senate; and, he is the first Louisiana legislator to do so and only the fourth legislator in the nation; and

WHEREAS, John Alario possesses a genteel and composed demeanor that puts others immediately at ease; he commands a room with a glance, he understands all of the intricate processes of state government, and he creates consensus among a wide variance of interests and political philosophies; and

WHEREAS, beginning in 1965, John Alario took an interest in politics and began

his journey with participation in parish executive committees; and when he ran for office, he and his family would tackle campaigning together; and

WHEREAS, elected to the house in 1972, he was among the "Young Turks", a group of energetic, newly elected legislators who encouraged legislative reform and independence and brought about the assembly of the 1973 Louisiana Constitutional Convention, CC73, which resulted in a breakthrough in the alignment of state government; and

WHEREAS, as a delegate to the convention, he exhibited confidence and leadership abilities during deliberations; and on January 19, 1974, the new state constitution was attested to with the signatures of its framers that included John A. Alario Jr.; and

WHEREAS, from 1979 until 1985, John Alario embraced an arduous leadership challenge as chairman of the Louisiana Exposition Authority; his responsibilities were to mold an alliance between state and local officials, to secure permission to host the 1984 World's Fair in New Orleans, to construct and manage the Louisiana Pavilion, and at its conclusion, to reconfigure the Great Hall into the proposed Ernest N. Morial Convention Center; the result was a complete transformation of 84 acres of the underutilized warehouse district into attractive commercial space for the city's tourism industry; and

WHEREAS, as an accountant and tax consultant, John Alario was superbly qualified to deliberate legislation before the fiscal and revenue committees while serving on both sides of the aisle; he served as chairman of the Revenue Estimating Conference for 16 of its 32 years of existence and chairman of the Interim Emergency Board, and as a member of the State Bond Commission, the joint committees on budget and capital outlay, and the Legislative Budgetary Control Council, which he co-chaired; and

WHEREAS, his house committee duties included membership on appropriations, ways and means, the executive committees, as well as six other standing committees and other special committees on homeland security, and the Louisiana Recovery District; and

WHEREAS, in 2005, when hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck the state, as chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, Alario focused on the immediate and long-term funding necessary to rebuild those areas affected by storm damage during the trying times of hurricane relief efforts, including a miraculous account of the rescue of hundreds of frozen embryos after a desperate phone call from Dr. Sissy Sartor, a fertility specialist in

New Orleans, explaining the rising water and power outage would result in their loss; John Alario contacted Governor Kathleen Blanco and the National Guard conducted a heroic recovery resulting in countless future successful pregnancies; and

WHEREAS, during his first term in the Senate, Senator Alario chaired the Select Committee on Coastal Restoration and Flood Control, served as a member of three standing Senate committees, and also served as a director of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Senator Alario also served on the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration and Conservation, the Louisiana International Deep Water Gulf Transfer Terminal Authority, and the American Legislative Exchange Council Tax and Fiscal Policy Task Force; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure, John Alario coauthored far-reaching legislation that established the Revenue Estimating Conference and the State Bond Debt Limitation; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary career, President Alario has been the deserving recipient of copious awards far too numerous to count that reflect his professional, civic, and philanthropic affiliations; however, he is particularly proud of his induction into the Louisiana Political Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, in 1994, the House of Representatives designated an addition in the Louisiana State Capitol as "Alario Hall" in recognition of his efforts to expand public participation and access to committee meetings; and

WHEREAS, he has worked tirelessly for various civic causes and secured funding for worthwhile capital outlay projects that promote economic development, such as the Avondale Marine LLC, the Jefferson Parish Economic Development District (JEDCO), and the Churchill Technology & Business Park; and

WHEREAS, capital outlay funding was secured for major infrastructure projects that include elevation of the West Bank Expressway, levee reinforcement, the widening of the Huey P. Long Bridge, the Fourth Street drainage project in Westwego, and West Bank Hurricane Protection; and

WHEREAS, educational opportunities were enhanced by his support of the Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy and the Delgado River City Site & Advanced

Manufacturing Center (Delgado Community College) in Avondale; and

WHEREAS, John Alario had a vision and a passion to secure funding for cultural venues for the humanities and the performing arts such as the Saenger Theater, the Westwego Performing Arts Theatre, and the Jefferson Performing Arts Center to showcase musical and dramatic performances for the public to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, Senator Alario has always supported the promotion of event centers and team facilities that include the Mercedes-Benz Superdome, the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, the Smoothie King Center, the Zephyr Stadium, the NOLA Motorsports Park, the John A. Alario Sr. Event Center in Westwego, the Bayou Segnette Sports Complex, and other venues to host spectacular sporting events, such as the Super Bowl, Sugar Bowl, NCAA championships, Bass Pro Fishing Tournaments at the Bayou Segnette State Park, plus professional athletic training facilities; and

WHEREAS, John Alario has been a lifelong crusader for the concerns of the disabled and the elderly and has worked tirelessly to improve the quality of life for these individuals including funding for home care, rehabilitative services, senior citizens centers for Westwego and Bridge City, and community-based support services, such as the Ree Alario Special Needs Center in Metairie; and

WHEREAS, many public and nonprofit agencies have benefitted from his guidance, such as the Louisiana Kidney Foundation, the Louisiana Cancer Research Consortium, the Louisiana Epilepsy Association, and the PGA Fore!Kids Foundation supported by Tournament Players Club (TPC) Louisiana that hosts the Zurich Golf Classic; and

WHEREAS, for all of the success John Alario has experienced in life, he attributes his good fortune to the love and support of his wife, the late Alba "Ree" Williamson Alario; together they reared a beautiful family, established a tax consultant business, and forged a political career that has endured for half a century; and

WHEREAS, John loves spending time with family; his sons, John, Chris, and Kevin; his daughters-in-law, Dionne, Christie, and Liz; and his grandchildren, Allison, Will, Laila, Collin, Garret, Ava Ree, and Maddox; however, everyone knows the twinkle in his eye belongs to his only daughter, Jan, who favors her mother and melts his heart with every utterance; and

WHEREAS, always the consummate statesman, his participation in the legislative process involved 106 regular, extraordinary, and organizational sessions; he has served with seven governors and 441 legislators; and his legacy may remain unmatched by any other elected official; and

WHEREAS, John Alario has been a masterful leader, an endearing friend, and confidant to his fellow legislators, colleagues, and staff in the Legislature of Louisiana; a gentleman who rises above the din with an open heart and sage wisdom; and

WHEREAS, as he prepares for the next chapter of life, Senate President John A. Alario Jr. merits a special tribute for his years of faithful public service, for his contributions to the betterment of the state of Louisiana, and for his exemplary accomplishments as an extraordinary leader and member of the Legislature of Louisiana.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend and congratulate the Honorable John A. Alario Jr., Senate President, for his forty-eight years of laudable public service to his constituency and to the great state of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby extend best wishes to our friend and colleague in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the Honorable John A. Alario Jr., president of the Senate of the state of Louisiana.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE