

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 38

BY SENATOR STINE

A RESOLUTION

To designate April 23, 2025, as McNeese State University Day at the Louisiana State Capitol and to commend McNeese State University for its recent successes and its vital contributions to the state of Louisiana.

WHEREAS, McNeese State University, located in Lake Charles, Louisiana, has long been a cornerstone of higher education in southwest Louisiana, providing quality academic programs, cultural enrichment, and economic development for the region and beyond; and

WHEREAS, McNeese State University, faced with a decade-long decline in enrollment, undertook a bold and comprehensive rightsizing initiative to restore financial sustainability and to renew its core mission of academic excellence and student success; and

WHEREAS, this effort, fueled by the collective resolve of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community stakeholders, produced a strategic plan focused on reversing enrollment trends and repositioning the university for long-term growth and impact; and

WHEREAS, the initial outcomes of this effort are exceptionally promising; the fall 2024 enrollment climbed by 3% to 6,243 students, reversing a fourteen-year downward trend, and spring 2025 enrollment rose by 3.6%, reversing a fifteen-year downward trend; and

WHEREAS, McNeese is also experiencing a dramatic rise in interest from future students, as evidenced by a 62% surge in Preview Day attendance, a 36.7% increase in Cowboy Commitment Day participation, a doubling in the number of high-school students submitting ACT scores to the university, and a 13% increase in applications for the 2025-2026 academic year; and

WHEREAS, this resurgence has generated renewed energy and pride across southwest Louisiana, with record levels of social-media engagement and website activity reflecting the community's excitement about McNeese's upward trajectory; and

WHEREAS, McNeese students continue to excel both academically and creatively, presenting original research at national academic conferences and achieving a historic milestone in the performing arts, with theater students advancing to the regional round of the

Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival for the first time in the university's history; and

WHEREAS, McNeese's athletic achievements have likewise garnered national attention, with the mens basketball team, led by Coach Will Wade, delivering a thrilling performance in the 2025 NCAA Tournament and demonstrating the strength, skill, and spirit of the Cowboys on a national stage; and

WHEREAS, the university's motto, "Ride for the Brand", captures the unity, resilience, and bold vision that defines the McNeese State University community as it continues to shape the future of Louisiana through education, innovation, and service.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Senate of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby designate April 23, 2025, as McNeese State University Day at the Louisiana State Capitol and does hereby commend the university for its recent accomplishments, renewed momentum, and its unwavering commitment to the people of Louisiana.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the president of McNeese State University.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE