

2015 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 95

BY REPRESENTATIVE HOFFMANN

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To recognize and commend the Smoking Cessation Trust for its dedicated efforts to improve public health in this state.

WHEREAS, smoking-related illnesses and deaths and their associated human and economic costs represent a devastating public health problem across the United States; and

WHEREAS, smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in our state and nation; and

WHEREAS, though smoking is an exceptionally difficult habit to break due to the powerful nature of addiction to cigarettes, thousands of Americans win the battle to quit smoking each year, many with the help of a smoking cessation program; and

WHEREAS, the Smoking Cessation Trust, referred to hereafter as "the trust", has emerged as a leader in this state in the extremely valuable work of promoting and facilitating smoking cessation; and

WHEREAS, the trust was formed pursuant to a landmark judgment in late 2011 in the class action lawsuit *Scott v. American Tobacco Co., Inc.* (2009-CA-0461 (La. App. 4 Cir. 4/23/10), 36 So. 3d 1046), which ordered certain tobacco companies to fund a statewide ten-year smoking cessation program, now operated by the trust, to be offered free of charge for the benefit of over two hundred thousand Louisiana smokers who started smoking prior to September 1, 1988, and comprise the *Scott* plaintiff class; and

WHEREAS, mindful of the limited duration of the program prescribed in the *Scott* decision, the trust's leadership worked swiftly in late 2011 and early 2012 to launch the program, and

WHEREAS, the trust enrolled its inaugural participants with the cooperation of Mary Bird Perkins Cancer Center's smoking cessation counseling program in April, 2012, and from that time to the date of filing of this Resolution has enrolled over twenty-seven

thousand seven hundred members in its smoking cessation programs, which include the following four evidence-based components:

- (1) Telephone quit-lines.
- (2) Health system interventions.
- (3) Intensive cessation programs.
- (4) Reimbursement for nicotine-related treatments and prescription medications for treating nicotine addiction; and

WHEREAS, the trust has enrolled participants from each of Louisiana's sixty-four parishes and has averaged over one thousand four hundred applicants monthly in the first three months of 2015, which is all the more remarkable considering that, pursuant to the *Scott* decision, the trust is required to expend its resources exclusively on operating smoking cessation programs, and may not utilize settlement funds for traditional advertising or marketing activities; and

WHEREAS, beyond enrollment numbers, the successes of the trust can be seen in testimonials available on its website, www.SmokeFreeLA.org, from the now-ex-smokers across Louisiana who, with the help of the trust's free programs and services, fought and won the battle to quit smoking.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby recognize and commend the Smoking Cessation Trust for its dedicated efforts and valuable work in combating smoking and improving public health in this state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby encourage all Louisianians who started smoking before September 1, 1988, and who have a desire to beat their addiction to cigarettes, to visit www.SmokeFreeLA.org to learn how the trust can help them in their quest to live smoke-free.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the chairperson of the board and the executive director of the Smoking Cessation Trust.

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE