

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 47

BY SENATORS GRAY, ALARIO, CROWE, DUPLESSIS, HEITMEIER, MARTINY, MURRAY, QUINN, SCALISE AND SHEPHERD AND REPRESENTATIVES ABRAMSON, AUSTIN BADON, BALDONE, TIM BURNS, CHAMPAGNE, CONNICK, CROMER, MICKEY GUILLORY, HENDERSON, HENRY, HUTTER, LABRUZZO, LAFONTA, LEGER, LIGI, LORUSSO, MONICA, MORRELL, PEARSON, PETERSON, RICHMOND AND WOOTON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the governor and the Board of Regents to support continued operational and capital outlay funding needs for public higher education institutions in Southeast Louisiana.

WHEREAS, the public higher education institutions in the greater New Orleans area educate nearly forty-four thousand students and serve as major employers for their region; and

WHEREAS, these institutions collectively suffered debilitating financial and physical losses as a result of Hurricane Katrina exceeding more than five hundred million dollars in physical damages and revenue losses; and

WHEREAS, these institutions collectively suffered significant enrollment and staff losses as a result of Hurricane Katrina, with a twenty-one percent average reduction in post-storm enrollment as of the Spring 2008 semester; and

WHEREAS, the weakened financial base and instability of operations have weakened the ability of these institutions to maintain operations and retain staff and provide adequate space and instruction for their current and potential students; and

WHEREAS, additional state funding appropriated in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 has assisted these institutions toward long-term recovery of operations, programs, faculty, and students; and

WHEREAS, these institutions are making steady progress, with the help of state and federal support, and intend to be fully restored over a five-year period to boost the region's recovery, grow its workforce base, and sustain research efforts vital to the long-term growth and transformation of the area's economy; and

WHEREAS, the hurricane-impacted public colleges and universities in the greater New Orleans region generated a pre-Katrina economic impact of more than five hundred thirty-seven million dollars with total employment exceeding twelve thousand seven hundred jobs (direct and secondary) and produced a total of fifty-six million one hundred thousand dollars in state and local tax revenue; and

WHEREAS, fifty percent of graduates of public colleges and universities in the greater New Orleans area have historically remained in the region as part of the labor force, a vital factor considering the estimated demand of fifty thousand plus workers that will be needed for the economic rebuilding in the region in the next few years.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana hereby urges and requests that the Board of Regents recommend and the governor provide recovery funds for public higher education institutions in Southeast Louisiana in Fiscal Year 2008-2009 at the same level as in Fiscal Year 2007-2008 in order to supplement continued enrollment and revenue losses, and to help fully restore these institutions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana also urges the funding of priority capital outlay projects of the public universities in the Southeast Louisiana region as an investment in infrastructure projects that will provide the foundation for new economic activity.

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES