

Regular Session, 2011

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 200

BY REPRESENTATIVES AUSTIN BADON, ABRAMSON, ARNOLD, AUBERT, BARROW, BISHOP, BROSSETT, BURRELL, DIXON, FRANKLIN, GALLOT, HARRISON, HENDERSON, HENRY, HINES, HONORE, GIROD JACKSON, MICHAEL JACKSON, ROSALIND JONES, LEGER, MORENO, NORTON, PATRICIA SMITH, STIAES, THIERRY, AND WILLIAMS AND SENATORS BROOME, DORSEY, JACKSON, MORRELL, MURRAY, PETERSON, AND WILLARD-LEWIS

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend and congratulate Pastor Fred Luter, Jr., upon being elected as the first African American vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

WHEREAS, Pastor Fred Luter, Jr., began serving the community and sharing his gift of ministry in 1983 as a street preacher in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans; and

WHEREAS, through an exercise of faith, in September 1986, the members of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church selected Rev. Luter as their pastor although he had no previous pastoral experience; and

WHEREAS, as pastor, Rev. Luter immediately went to work to increase the membership of the small, fledgling, sixty-five member church; and

WHEREAS, in 1992, as a result of his devotion to God, he was blessed to become the first African American to be elected to the executive board of the Louisiana Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, under God's continued guidance and blessings, Pastor Luter went on to become the first African American minister to address the Southern Baptist Convention in 2001; and

WHEREAS, prior to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the church's congregation had grown to a remarkable seven thousand members; and

WHEREAS, in the wake of the destructive storm that ravaged the city, members of the Franklin Avenue Baptist Church were forced to relocate to other areas of the country; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Luter was not deterred by the population displacement but worked to minister to his congregants by holding worship services in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Houston; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Luter returned to New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina to serve on the Bring Back New Orleans Committee and to help rebuild the city; and

WHEREAS, through diligence and commitment and God's blessings, the membership at Franklin Avenue Baptist Church has surpassed pre-Katrina levels and the church is currently the largest Southern Baptist church in the state of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, in honor to God and under Pastor Fred Luter, Jr.'s strong leadership and inspiration, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church has sponsored over twelve missions and has opened the Hope House, a home for homeless families; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Luter is highly respected and admired as a beloved pastor and a true man of God who evidences humility and wisdom; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Luter is married to Elizabeth and they are the parents of Kimberly and Fred "Chip" Luter III; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptist Convention was established in 1845 after a break from northern churches over their opposition to slavery; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptist Convention was either silent or actively opposed to civil rights throughout the 1960s and 1970s; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, the Southern Baptist Convention issued a public apology to African Americans for its stance on slavery and civil rights laws; and

WHEREAS, the Southern Baptist Convention has sixteen million members, with an increasing number of African Americans, Hispanics, and Asians, and represents the country's largest Protestant denomination; and

WHEREAS, there are over forty-five thousand churches which are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, Franklin Avenue Baptist Church is among the three thousand four hundred churches with predominantly black congregations which are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, the 2011 annual Southern Baptist Convention was held in June in Phoenix, Arizona; and

WHEREAS, at the 2011 convention, in an overwhelming show of support, Pastor Fred Luter, Jr., was elected by seventy-seven percent of the voters to be the next vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, the office of vice president will be the highest position yet held by an African American member of the Southern Baptist Convention; and

WHEREAS, Pastor Fred Luter, Jr.'s election to a senior position in the Southern Baptist Convention's leadership signifies a new chapter in the organization's history and a future of racial inclusion and diversity.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby congratulate Pastor Fred Luter, Jr., upon his being elected as the first African American vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention, does hereby commend and honor the noble achievements and exemplary strides that he has taken in his guidance of a loving and dedicated spiritual community, and does hereby wish Pastor Luter full measures of continued success, happiness, and richest blessings in all of his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a suitable copy of this Resolution be transmitted to Pastor Fred Luter, Jr.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE