

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 108

BY REPRESENTATIVES MYERS, AMEDEE, BEAULLIEU, BILLINGS, BOURRIAQUE, BRASS, BRYANT, BUTLER, CARRIER, CHASSION, EMERSON, FARNUM, HEBERT, HENRY, JACOB LANDRY, MILLER, ROMERO, ST. BLANC, TARVER, WILEY, AND ZERINGUE AND SENATORS ABRAHAM, BOUDREAUX, COUSSAN, HENSGENS, KLEINPETER, MIGUEZ, PRICE, REESE, AND STINE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To commend the 2024 *Festival Acadiens et Créoles* in Lafayette on the occasion the festival's fiftieth anniversary.

WHEREAS, Acadians, or Cajuns as they are known in South Louisiana, were exiled from Nova Scotia in 1755; they brought with them a rich cultural heritage that blended French, Celtic, Scots-Irish, and Native American traditions, and this mixture is most evident in their rich folklore and catalogue of songs and dances; and

WHEREAS, by the turn of the twentieth century, the French language was nearly pushed into obscurity in the United States as a result of the increasing homogenization of American culture; and

WHEREAS, the French language was further challenged in 1916 when mandatory English language education was imposed on the American South; in an attempt to address low literacy rates in the South, French and other non-English languages were rooted out; tragically, several generations of Cajuns and Créoles were convinced that speaking French was a sign of cultural illegitimacy; and

WHEREAS, the French language experienced a resurgence in the late 1940s after French-speaking American soldiers serving in France discovered that the language made them invaluable as interpreters; after the war, many returning servicemen immersed themselves in their local cultures, and dance halls in South Louisiana hummed with the familiar and comforting sounds of Cajun music; and

WHEREAS, the state of Louisiana officially recognized the Cajun cultural revival by creating the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana (CODOFIL) in 1968; under the chairmanship of James Domengeaux, CODOFIL began efforts on political, psychological, and educational fronts to erase the stigma Louisianians had long attached to the French language and culture; and

WHEREAS, CODOFIL organized the first Tribute to Cajun Music Festival in 1974; the festival served as the catalyst needed to attract and educate the younger generation to the traditional values of Cajun culture; the first Tribute to Cajun Music concert was held in Lafayette's Blackham Coliseum on March 26, 1974; in 1976, the council moved the concert to Girard Park, and the Natural History Museum agreed to hold its crafts festival on the same weekend; and

WHEREAS, *Festival Acadiens et Créoles* is a cooperative of independent festivals that began as *Festival Acadiens* in 1977; the oldest single component of the group is the Louisiana Native and Contemporary Crafts Festival, which debuted as the Louisiana Native Crafts Festival on October 28, 1972, on the grounds of the Lafayette Natural History Museum near Girard Park; the festival is a combination of events focusing on the crafts, music, and food of South Louisiana; and

WHEREAS, *Festival Acadiens* developed a community board and became an independent nonprofit cooperation in 2007; the next year, the co-op officially changed its name to *Festivals Acadiens et Créoles* to more accurately reflect the cultures that make up the three components of the festival; and

WHEREAS, since the 1970s, the festival has consistently championed creative cultural continuity; the organizers strive to present the current state of the culture through performances ranging from the oldest Cajun ballads to the latest in experimental Cajun and Zydeco music; additionally, the Cajun and Créole chefs and craftsmen continue to invest themselves in the celebration of this rich culture.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby commend the 2024 *Festival Acadiens et Créoles* in Lafayette on the occasion the festival's fiftieth anniversary and does hereby extend sincerest wishes that the festival's organizers, participants, and attendees continue supporting and sharing South Louisiana's culture for many more years to come.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE