

1 HJR148
2 218963-1
3 By Representative McCutcheon
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 15-MAR-22

COMMENDING SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE OF THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES VICTOR GASTON ON HIS ACCOMPLISHED CAREER OF
SERVICE.

WHEREAS, on the eve of the conclusion of
Representative Victor Gaston's long and storied career of
public service, we find it necessary and proper to recount his
many accomplishments; and

WHEREAS, born in the Union Church community of
Mobile County and raised on a family cattle farm that also
produced soybeans, cotton, and other commodities, Gaston
graduated from Mobile County High School, where he lettered in
football and basketball, and was named the area's "Outstanding
Student of 1961"; and

WHEREAS, Gaston began his career serving as a
classroom history teacher at Davidson High School; he earned
his Bachelor's Degree from the University of Southern
Mississippi; he later earned a Master's Degree in School
Administration from the University of South Alabama and a
Doctorate of Education from Auburn University; he served as

1 assistant principal at Adams Middle School and at Satsuma High
2 Schoo, the latter for 18 years, before retiring from public
3 education in 1997; and

4 WHEREAS, Gaston served his country as a member of
5 the Marine Corps Reserves, where he earned the rank of staff
6 sergeant during a decade-long career; he served an additional
7 10 years in the Alabama National Guard; he was called to
8 active duty in response to Hurricane Frederic in 1979 and was
9 also deployed for a period in South Korea; and

10 WHEREAS, after Ronald Reagan carried the 1980
11 presidential election, Gaston, running as a Republican in a
12 state then bereft of Republicans, won an Alabama State House
13 seat over a well-entrenched Democrat incumbent; after winning
14 the two elections with over three-quarters of the vote, he has
15 run unopposed since 1986; Gaston currently holds the record
16 for the longest unopposed election streak of any state
17 legislator in the South; and

18 WHEREAS, upon initially taking office, Gaston was
19 one of only 11 Republicans who served in the 140-member
20 Legislature during the 1982-1986 quadrennium; however, that
21 small number included future U.S. Congressman Mo Brooks,
22 future U.S. Ambassador to the Czech Republic Bill Cabaniss,
23 and former Birmingham Mayor George Siebels; and

24 WHEREAS, in 1987, Speaker of the House Jimmy Clark
25 of Eufaula took note of Gaston's leadership abilities and
26 appointed him to be the only Republican committee chairman in
27 the House of Representatives, heading the House State

1 Government Committee, one of the four major legislative
2 committees at that time; when Republicans won legislative
3 majority for the first time since Reconstruction in 2010,
4 Gaston was honored with election as Speaker Pro Tempore, the
5 second highest ranking post in the legislative body; and

6 WHEREAS, elected to his tenth term in 2018, State
7 Representative Victor Gaston currently remains serving as
8 Speaker Pro Tempore of the Alabama House of Representatives;
9 he was elevated to Acting Speaker of the House in June of
10 2016, and earned widespread praise for restoring faith and
11 returning stability to that office during a difficult time;
12 during his tenure as Acting Speaker, Gaston carried out the
13 body's administrative duties, issued a call for higher ethical
14 standards among public officials, and, after deciding not to
15 seek the office himself, presided over the election of the new
16 Speaker of the House; and

17 WHEREAS, Gaston's legislative accomplishments
18 include passage of several reform measures that have improved
19 and strengthened Alabama's higher education system, the
20 Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit that has ignited a wave of
21 urban renewal and historic preservation projects across the
22 state and boosted the economy, a legislative exchange trip to
23 Romania, a gubernatorial trade mission to Chile and Brazil,
24 election as delegate to six Republican National Conventions
25 between 1984 and 2004, membership on the White House
26 Commission on Presidential Scholars of both the Reagan and
27 George H.W. Bush administrations, 12 years of chairmanship of

1 the Permanent Oil and Gas Study Committee, 8 years of service
2 on the United States Energy Council, and current chairmanship
3 of the House Legislative Council and co-chairmanship of the
4 Joint Legislative Council, among a plethora of other
5 accomplishments, too numerous to recount here lest we delay
6 his retirement; and

7 WHEREAS, perhaps dearest to Gaston's heart are his
8 community service endeavors, including service on the boards
9 of Volunteers of America; Penelope House, a domestic violence
10 shelter; Home of Grace for Women, an alcohol and drug
11 treatment center; AltaPointe, a South Alabama mental health
12 center; SOMI Club, a mental illness outreach organization; the
13 4-H Club Foundation; the Mobile Area Chamber of Commerce; and
14 the Mobile Association of Retarded Citizens; he serves as
15 deacon of Spring Hill Baptist Church in Mobile, and has
16 participated in 125 consecutive performances of Spring Hill
17 Baptist's renowned "This is Christmas" musical presentation;
18 and

19 WHEREAS, Gaston freely admits that none of these
20 accomplishments would be possible without the love, support,
21 and constant encouragement of his late wife of 46 years, Jean,
22 whom he met while serving on the Dauphin Way Baptist Church
23 Bus Ministry; together, they had two sons: George, an attorney
24 in Mobile, and Hank, an executive with Hyundai Steel America
25 in Greenville, and six grandsons: Jason, James, Cameron,
26 Matthew, Noah, and Charlie; and

1 WHEREAS, although Gaston has declared that he will
2 not run for reelection to the House seat he has occupied for
3 decades, this body knows well that his dedication to public
4 service will not end when he crosses the threshold of the
5 State House; rather, the commendations within this resolution
6 are given with the knowledge that he will continue serving his
7 fellow Alabamians and fellow humans for many days; now
8 therefore,

9 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
10 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That State Representative and
11 longtime Speaker Pro Tempore of the House of Representatives
12 Victor Gaston is hereby commended for a lifetime of service to
13 the State of Alabama.

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this
15 resolution be delivered to Representative Victor Gaston, as a
16 mere token of our immense gratitude and congratulations on the
17 occasion of his retirement.