

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 554

WHEREAS, The online juris doctor program at St. Mary's University School of Law in San Antonio has earned the distinction of being the first fully online law degree program that has been accredited by the American Bar Association; and

WHEREAS, St. Mary's University School of Law dates back to 1927, when the San Antonio School of Law was founded by the local bar association as a part-time institution that met at night; shortly thereafter, St. Mary's offered to make it into a university law school with full-time faculty and a stronger curriculum, and in 1934, the law school acquired its current name and its Catholic and Marianist mission; and

WHEREAS, In summer 2020, an ad hoc committee made up of full-time tenured, tenure-track, and clinical faculty was formed at the direction of Dean Patricia Roberts to explore the viability of an online program, and on January 15, 2021, the school applied for acquiescence from the ABA to change its part-time residential program to a completely distance education program consisting of synchronous and asynchronous online instruction; and

WHEREAS, In an effort to make a legal education more accessible, particularly for those who are typically underrepresented, the St. Mary's online juris doctor program was designated as a part-time program so that students could attend law school without having to forfeit their employment; they will have access to the same opportunities and resources as full-time students, without the costs usually associated with relocation and long commutes; the fall 2022 online cohort consists of 27 inaugural students who were matriculated from a lengthy list of 797 applicants, and together they represent 9 different states and 20 undergraduate universities; St. Mary's benefits from the leadership of its president, Tom Mengler, and its provost and executive vice president for academic affairs, Jason Pierce, and the law school is led by Dean Roberts and associate deans Ramona Lampley, Colin Marks, and Zoe Niesel; and

WHEREAS, For nine decades, St. Mary's University School of Law has diligently prepared generations of attorneys with the highest standards of skill, knowledge, and professionalism, and its online juris doctor program is a testament to its ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby commend the online juris doctor program at St. Mary's University School of Law and extend to all those associated with the program sincere best wishes for continued success; and, be it further

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RESOLVED, That an official copy of this Resolution be prepared for the law school as an expression of high regard from the Texas Senate.

Menéndez

Alvarado	Hancock	Nichols
Bettencourt	Hinojosa	Parker
Birdwell	Huffman	Paxton
Blanco	Hughes	Perry
Campbell	Johnson	Schwertner
Creighton	King	Sparks
Eckhardt	Kolkhorst	Springer
Flores	LaMantia	West
Gutierrez	Middleton	Whitmire
Hall	Miles	Zaffirini

Patrick, President of the Senate

President of the Senate

I hereby certify that the above Resolution was adopted by the Senate on May 11, 2023.

Secretary of the Senate

Member, Texas Senate