

By: Menéndez, et al.

S.R. No. 554

R E S O L U T I O N

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

5 WHEREAS, St. Mary's University School of Law dates back to
6 1927, when the San Antonio School of Law was founded by the local
7 bar association as a part-time institution that met at night;
8 shortly thereafter, St. Mary's offered to make it into a university
9 law school with full-time faculty and a stronger curriculum, and in
10 1934, the law school acquired its current name and its Catholic and
11 Marianist mission; and

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

19 WHEREAS, In an effort to make a legal education more
20 accessible, particularly for those who are typically
21 underrepresented, the St. Mary's online juris doctor program was
22 designated as a part-time program so that students could attend law
23 school without having to forfeit their employment; they will have
24 access to the same opportunities and resources as full-time

1 students, without the costs usually associated with relocation and
2 long commutes; the fall 2022 online cohort consists of 27 inaugural
3 students who were matriculated from a lengthy list of 797
4 applicants, and together they represent 9 different states and 20
5 undergraduate universities; St. Mary's benefits from the
6 leadership of its president, Tom Mengler, and its provost and
7 executive vice president for academic affairs, Jason Pierce, and
8 the law school is led by Dean Roberts and associate deans Ramona
9 Lampley, Colin Marks, and Zoe Niesel; and

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

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

20 RESOLVED, That an official copy of this resolution be
21 prepared for the law school as an expression of high regard by the
22 Texas Senate.