

ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION COUNCIL SERIES NO.: C-7079

COUNCIL SPONSOR: MR. COUGLE

PROVIDED BY: COUNCIL OFFICE

RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO REDUCTION IN DISTRICT COUNCIL
MEMBERS OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

WHEREAS, in January of 2025, the Home Rule Charter Advisory Committee began to meet and immediately focused on the issue of reducing the number of District Council Members on the Parish Council; and

WHEREAS, a study commissioned by a tri-parish special interest group which has lobbied for a reduction of the number of District Council Members continues to be circulated among the council members and the public. This study argues that nearby Orleans and Jefferson Parish Councils are a superior form of government and St. Tammany should adopt a similar council system; and

WHEREAS, presently, Orleans City Council has more than **7 times** the council staff of St. Tammany, and Jefferson has more than **10 times** the council staff of St. Tammany, and as such, this would constitute an exponential increase in the size and cost of government in St. Tammany parish; and

WHEREAS, as St. Tammany parish is a largely rural parish, with **5 times** the land of Orleans Parish and nearly **3 times** the land of Jefferson Parish, a reduction would further dilute the vote and representation of the rural communities in St. Tammany parish. The Town of Pearl River already unanimously passed a resolution in opposition to reduction in December of 2024; and

WHEREAS, such a reduction would consolidate power and limit influence and access to fewer at the expense of the majority of St. Tammany residents; and

WHEREAS, such a reduction would transfer influence and power from the council, the branch of government closest to the people, to the executive branch of St. Tammany government, further disrupting the balance of power between the two branches; and

WHEREAS, some elected officials have argued that the current time requirements of District Council Members is equivalent to that of a full-time job, so to increase the size of districts with a member reduction would be particularly irresponsible and dramatically decrease access of constituents to their elected representatives; and

WHEREAS, if district sizes are increased through a council member reduction and the District Council Members were mandated to be full-time employees, this would exclude working class St. Tammany residents such as teachers, farmers, small business owners and others from being able to serve their community on the council, limiting council offices to professional politicians and excluding every day St. Tammany residents from service; and

WHEREAS, reducing the number of council members would increase each remaining member's number of constituents, and therefore would reduce access of individual St. Tammany residents to their representatives. As the reduction of council members would be coupled with an exponential increase in council staff, this would ultimately result in functionally replacing the former district council members with dozens of full-time government employees who would then be the gatekeepers between constituents and representatives due to the increase in district size; and

WHEREAS, a reduction in council members and the replacement of some districts with At-Large members, making council members full-time, and a dramatic increase in council staff would result in a significant financial cost to taxpayers due to additional expenses for salaries, retirements, benefits and office space.

THEREFORE, THE PARISH COUNCIL OF ST. TAMMANY HEREBY RESOLVES to:

1. Oppose reduction of the number of District Council Members on the Parish Council, due to the proposal's:
 - a. Dramatic increase in the size and cost of government due to:
 - i. dozens of new full-time council staff members
 - ii. full-time salaries, retirements and benefits for council members and staff and
 - iii. dozens of new offices, likely requiring a new council building
 - b. Dilution of the rural vote and diminishing of the representation of rural communities in St. Tammany parish
 - c. Transfer of power of the council, the legislative branch of the St. Tammany parish government, to the executive branch, further disrupting the balance of power between the two branches
 - d. Transfer of influence and access from everyday St. Tammany residents to the select few
 - e. Exclusion of teachers, farmers, small business owners and other working class St. Tammany residents from being able to serve part-time on the council, instead permitting only professional politicians while excluding every day St. Tammany residents
2. and inform the Home Rule Charter Advisory Committee of the same

THIS RESOLUTION HAVING BEEN SUBMITTED TO A VOTE; THE VOTE THEREON WAS AS
FOLLOWS:

MOVED FOR ADOPTION BY: _____ SECONDED BY: _____

YEAS:

NAYS:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

THIS RESOLUTION WAS DECLARED DULY ADOPTED ON THE 6TH DAY OF MARCH, 2025, AT A
REGULAR MEETING OF THE ST. TAMMANY PARISH COUNCIL, A QUORUM OF THE MEMBERS BEING
PRESENT AND VOTING.

JOE IMPASTATO, COUNCIL CHAIR

ATTEST:

KATRINA L. BUCKLEY, COUNCIL CLERK