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REPUBLICAN LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION ANNOUNCES JOHN. J. HAINKEL LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS

BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA - The John J. Hainkel Leadership Award, named in honor the only Republican in the nation ever to have served as both the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, has been awarded to Senator Conrad Appel and Representative Erich Ponti. This annual award honors members of the Louisiana Republican Legislative Delegation who carry the Hainkel banner of accountable government, respect for the free market, and lower taxes.

In the Senate Delegation, Senator Conrad Appel (R-Metairie) was recognized by his Senate colleagues for his leadership in seeking an effective system of public higher education in the New Orleans region. Senator Appel realizes that there is a real opportunity in the New Orleans region to make the changes needed to properly educate—and ultimately graduate—New Orleans area students. He introduced legislation during the 2011 Regular Session to create a new path forward for improving the higher education system in this region, particularly Senate Bill 183 which sought to combine UNO, SUNO, and Delgado into one effective structure of regional higher education.

Senate Delegation Chair Danny Martiny stated, "Senator Appel confronted head-on the systemic problems which Louisiana faces in reforming higher education. His persistence and tenacity dealing with this most controversial issue resulted in Louisiana taking the first step in fulfilling his vision to provide the citizens of Louisiana with a first-class educational system."

Representative Erich Ponti (R-Baton Rouge) was selected by his House Delegation colleagues as the recipient of this leadership award. In the recently completed extraordinary legislative session, Representative Ponti successfully authored House Bill 6 which provided for the redistricting of Louisiana's congressional districts. House Delegation Chair Jane Smith recognized Representative Ponti's tireless efforts in congressional redistricting. Representative Smith said, "When everyone else thought it was dead, Representative Ponti never gave up on getting a plan passed which was acceptable to all entities across the state."

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