

By: Senator(s) Hyde-Smith

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 17

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CIVIC AND CHARITABLE  
2 CONTRIBUTIONS OF JONNIE IRMA BENSON RILEY OF NEW HEBRON, LAWRENCE  
3 COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI.

4 WHEREAS, Jonnie Irma Benson Riley was born June 30, 1907, in  
5 Lawrence County, Mississippi, unto Lola Shows Benson and C. Floyd  
6 Benson; and

7 WHEREAS, she finished New Hebron High School at the age of 15  
8 with highest honors and was an honor student at Women's College in  
9 Hattiesburg; and

10 WHEREAS, she married Vernon L. Riley of New Hebron on October  
11 3, 1928 (Vernon passed away December 10, 1968), and they are the  
12 parents of five children (three girls and two boys), 17  
13 grandchildren, 44 great grandchildren and one great-great  
14 grandchild; and

15 WHEREAS, she taught Sunday School for 40 years and served as  
16 a pianist for 35 years, and has been an active member of the  
17 Baptist Church for 80 years; and

18 WHEREAS, she has been past President of the local PTA, member  
19 of Evergreen Garden Club, sponsor of Acteens and Girl Reserve  
20 organizations, and President of the Fifth Area YWCA; and

21 WHEREAS, during her 52 years as a member of Mississippi  
22 Federation of Women's Club, she attended the 50th Anniversary  
23 Celebration as State President, presided over the 75th Celebration  
24 and was an active participant in the 100th Celebration; and

25 WHEREAS, under her Federation leadership, New Hebron  
26 installed streetlights, lights in the cemetery, street names and  
27 markers, and house numbers; and won a second place award in

28 General Federation. She was instrumental in fundraising for the  
29 town public library. She is the only charter member of New Hebron  
30 Club still active in Federation work; and

31 WHEREAS, she served on the ETV Board of Directors; when the  
32 ETV Bill was seriously in jeopardy of failing, she joined other  
33 club women in making phone calls, sending telegrams and personal  
34 visits to the Legislators; and

35 WHEREAS, she donated land on Main Street of New Hebron for  
36 construction of the City Hall and the Fire Station; and provided  
37 land for a city park to be furnished by local civic groups; and

38 WHEREAS, she served on the Mississippi Status of Women's  
39 Commission, appointed by Governor William Waller; and

40 WHEREAS, she was a member of Citizens Control of Federal  
41 Spending during the term of President Richard Nixon; and

42 WHEREAS, she has been a member of the Order of the Easter  
43 Star (OES) since 1933. Serving as Worthy Matron several times,  
44 was Secretary for 20 years and served in several other offices of  
45 the local order. On the state level, she served as District  
46 Deputy Grand Matron, Grand Organist, and in 1955, was elected  
47 Worthy Grand Matron of Mississippi OES. She concluded her term by  
48 presiding over the Golden Anniversary Session Grand Chapter held  
49 in Jackson, Mississippi; and

50 WHEREAS, she served on the International Temple Committee of  
51 General Chapter from 1973 through 1976, and has attended General  
52 Grand Chapter consecutively since the 1949 Session held in  
53 Toronto, Canada. She was presented a Certificate of Appreciation  
54 from the Mississippi and General Chapter at the 1999 meeting in  
55 Detroit, Michigan; and

56 WHEREAS, she served as Chairman of the Ritual Committee, the  
57 Jurisprudence Committee and the Hospitality Committee on the State  
58 level in OES; and

59           WHEREAS, she served on the Board of Trustees of the Rob  
60 Morris Little Red School House for five years, and was Chairman  
61 when the Caretakers Residence was built; and

62           WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the  
63 uninterrupted civic leadership and charitable contributions of  
64 this great lady who has brought honor to her community and to the  
65 State of Mississippi:

66           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
67 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the civic and charitable  
68 contributions of Jonnie Irma Benson Riley of New Hebron, Lawrence  
69 County, Mississippi, as an example to all citizens of Mississippi,  
70 and wish her continued success in her future endeavors.

71           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
72 Jonnie Irma Benson Riley and her family, and be made available to  
73 the Capitol Press Corps.