SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 587

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF MARK F. SMITH, LONGTIME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COALITION FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, longtime Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities Mark F. Smith passed away on Monday, February 25, 2002; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was the Executive Director of the Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities since 1992. Under his leadership, disability groups throughout Mississippi were organized to push for improvements to service systems and to provide additional opportunities in health care, home- and community-based services, housing, education, transportation and employment; and

WHEREAS, prior to his work with the Coalition, Mr. Smith was employed by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services as Director of the Office of Special Services for Individuals with Disabilities, Program Director of Special Projects, Program Coordinator of Grants and Program Development, Facility Manager of Allied Enterprises of Rankin County, and Vocational Evaluator for the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. He was a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi and received a Master's Degree from Mississippi State University; and

WHEREAS, Mark Smith was a gifted grants writer and was responsible for bringing millions of dollars into Mississippi for the establishment and expansion of programs of service for people with disabilities. He was instrumental in establishing a system of independent living centers, Living Independence For Everyone.
(LIFE) of Mississippi, and served as the Project Director of this
program for many years; and

WHEREAS, he developed and administered many innovative
programs employing and assisting people with disabilities
including AmeriCorps MPOWERS (Mississippians Promoting
Opportunities for Work, Equality, and Renewal) with the
Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Services; Healthy Futures;
Adolescent Transition in Mississippi; and Mississippi ADA
(Americans with Disabilities Act) Network affiliated with the
Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was particularly proud of his work with
youth with disabilities as a sponsor and coach for the Challenger
League. In recent years, under his leadership, the Coalition
hosted the Spirit of the ADA Torch Relay providing over 140
individuals with disabilities the opportunity to "carry the torch"
for employment; conducted a series of Job Fairs for people with
disabilities; and hosted two highly successful Youth Leadership
Conferences for adolescents with disabilities and their families;
and

WHEREAS, he was the National Truth Team Coordinator for
Justice For All, a national advocacy organization. During the
11th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July
26, 2001, Mr. Smith was awarded the national "Justice For All
Disability Rights Award." He was one of the only grassroots
leaders being recognized along with other honorees, former Senator
Bob Dole, Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Ted
Kennedy; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith served on a number of national and state
boards for disability organizations. He was a tireless worker and
received many other honors and awards; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith's legacy will be the thousands of people
whose lives he touched. He worked unceasingly to help others. He
saw the best in everyone. His diligence and devotion were
unparalleled. Because of his vision and his efforts, he left the
world a better place; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Smith is survived by his wife, Denise Bowman
Smith of Jackson; daughter, Erin McPeak of Laurel; grand-daughter,
Lydia McPeak; two brothers, Mathew Smith of Walnut Creek,
California, and Rev. Jerry Smith of New Orleans, Louisiana; and
nephews and nieces; and

WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
dedicated public servant and advocate, whose contributions to his
community and state will serve as a model for us all:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
we do hereby commend the life and career of Mark F. Smith,
longtime Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition for
Citizens with Disabilities, and do hereby express the sympathy of
the Legislature on his passing.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
the surviving family of Mark Smith, be forwarded to the Coalition
for Citizens with Disabilities and be made available to the
Capitol Press Corps.