

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Simmons

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 18

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE OF BETTIE WILSON OF UNION
2 COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI, THE NATION'S SECOND-OLDEST WOMAN, AND
3 EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE SENATE.

4 WHEREAS, Bettie Wilson of Union County, Mississippi, who was
5 officially recognized as the nation's second-oldest woman, passed
6 away on Monday, February 13, 2006, at the age of 115; and

7 WHEREAS, Bettie Wilson was born September 13, 1890, the
8 daughter of former slaves; and

9 WHEREAS, New Albany Mayor, Tim Kent, and other local
10 officials have expressed sadness at the news of the death of this
11 very popular citizen, who had a wonderful demeanor and spirit
12 about her; and

13 WHEREAS, Bettie Wilson was recognized as the world's
14 fourth-oldest person until August 30, 2005, when the oldest,
15 Hendrikje van Andel-Schipper, died in the Netherlands. Then, she
16 was cited as the second-oldest in the United States behind Lizzie
17 Bolden of Memphis, Tennessee, born August 15, 1890. Bolden is
18 believed to be living in a nursing home there; and

19 WHEREAS, Elizabeth Payne, a Professor of History at the
20 University of Mississippi, interviewed Wilson in December for a
21 project on Union County women older than 70. "She was truly a
22 remarkable and resilient woman who was born at one of the most
23 restrictive times for African-Americans," Payne said; and

24 WHEREAS, because Bettie Wilson's parents were slaves, her
25 life and stories in many ways exemplify the lives of
26 African-Americans born in the late 1800s. "I think that what I
27 saw in Miss Bettie grew out of the African-American slave

28 experience, that is they were forbidden to read and write.
29 Because of that, the family history had to be protected and
30 conveyed in oral history so that the stories were very much kept
31 alive in her and passed down to her children," Payne said; and

32 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
33 respected citizen, who was only one generation removed from
34 slavery and was able to recall her life in vivid detail:

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
36 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the life of Bettie Wilson
37 of New Albany, Union County, Mississippi, the nation's
38 second-oldest woman, and express to her surviving family the
39 sympathy of the Senate on her passing.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
41 her grandson, James Rogers, and be made available to the Capitol
42 Press Corps.