

By: Senator(s) Simmons, Butler, Frazier,
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To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 637

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE GENEROSITY OF
2 MISSISSIPPI DELTA BUSINESSMAN LUSTER BAYLESS FOR HIS CONTRIBUTION
3 OF REAL ESTATE TO THE FANNIE LOU HAMER CANCER FOUNDATION IN
4 RULEVILLE, MISSISSIPPI.

5 WHEREAS, the fledgling but fast-growing Fannie Lou Hamer
6 Cancer Foundation in Ruleville, Mississippi, has obtained the two
7 acres of land that it plans to use as the site of its future home,
8 a center where Mississippi Deltans can receive both
9 cancer-awareness education and medical screenings; and

10 WHEREAS, the foundation acquired the two-acre plot along
11 Mississippi Highway 8 from local businessman Luster Bayless. The
12 foundation paid \$25,000.00 for property that two appraisers had
13 valued at \$76,000.00 and \$79,000.00, foundation Chairperson
14 Freddie White-Johnson said. "It was a good opportunity for the
15 foundation and it was a goodwill gesture on his part"; and

16 WHEREAS, the life of Luster Bayless has got to be a pure
17 slice of Americana -- from a shotgun house on the Mississippi
18 Delta to the glitz and glamour of Hollywood. Only in America. It
19 didn't just happen "poof" like that. It was no overnight
20 transition. Just like most success stories, there was work
21 involved and Bayless wasn't afraid of it; and

22 WHEREAS, he started early on a tiny farm in Ruleville, where
23 he was born October 26, 1937, to David and Jimmie Lee Bayless.
24 Bayless grew into a local high school football standout, and was
25 offered a scholarship to a state college, but there was a job
26 waiting for him in Hollywood and life really began for the kid
27 from the Delta. He went to work for Western Costume and stayed
28 long enough to learn the basics of his trade and get his Costumers

29 Union Card. After that, he left to freelance and see what
30 Hollywood might have for him; and

31 WHEREAS, his first film was, of all things, "Hitler,"
32 starring Richard Basehart. Then it was off to the races. He did
33 "Cheyenne Autumn" with John Ford, then costumed Glenn Ford in
34 "Advance to the Rear," which George Marshall directed. Then in
35 1963 he found himself at Disney Studios doing "Mary Poppins"; and

36 WHEREAS, while at Disney Studios he also found Patricia Joan
37 Voght, and the two were married in 1965, and the couple had two
38 daughters, Christina and Diane; and

39 WHEREAS, then came the second key phone call in Bayless'
40 life, to work on a picture called "True Grit," starring John
41 Wayne. The new job led to a lasting relationship with Wayne, with
42 whom he did more than a dozen films as the Duke's personal
43 costumer. The final picture the two did was "The Shootist,"
44 co-starring Lauren Bacall and a young actor named Ron Howard,
45 currently one of the hottest directors in the industry; and

46 WHEREAS, at this point, Bayless decided he wanted his own
47 business, so he founded American Costume Company in 1978. Wayne
48 not only encouraged his young friend, but also loaned him all the
49 costumes he owned from the Batjac Productions Company to get him
50 started. Since then and following Duke's death in 1979, Michael
51 Wayne, the star's eldest son and Batjac CEO, has been one of
52 Bayless' most valuable advisers. Today, the little venture that
53 began in a small building about the size of a two-car garage, now
54 operates smoothly and successfully, in two side-by-side warehouses
55 in North Hollywood, covering more than 40,000 square feet of
56 showrooms, workrooms, tailor shops and offices. It covers the
57 entire period from 1770 to 1970, in all phases of wardrobe, and it
58 has been more than ample in dressing actors and actresses in more
59 than 3,000 projects in both motion pictures and television; and

60 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the
61 generosity of this entrepreneur, whose success is an inspiration

62 to all Mississippians and whose concern for the citizens of his
63 native Mississippi Delta is a much-appreciated reality:

64 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
65 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
66 we do hereby commend the generosity of Mississippi Delta
67 businessman Luster Bayless for his contribution of real estate to
68 the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer Foundation in Ruleville, Mississippi,
69 and for his successful business career which is an inspiration for
70 all Mississippians, and extend to him and his family the best
71 wishes of the Legislature for future success.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
73 Luster Bayless, forwarded to the Fannie Lou Hamer Cancer
74 Foundation and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.