

By: Senator(s) Dearing, Little

To: Adopted

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 30

1 A RESOLUTION TO COMMEND SENATOR BILLY HOWARD THAMES FOR HIS
2 DISTINGUISHED SERVICE IN THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE.

3 WHEREAS, Senator Billy Howard Thames is retiring from the
4 Mississippi Senate after serving 28 years in office; and

5 WHEREAS, Senator Billy Thames is a man of integrity and hard
6 work, and there is an acknowledged respect for the public and
7 private life of our esteemed and beloved colleague, who is a role
8 model for all members of the Mississippi Senate; and

9 WHEREAS, Senator Thames first entered politics in 1976 when
10 he was elected to the Smith County School Board. He ran for the
11 Mississippi State Senate in 1979, won, and has been reelected
12 seven times representing Smith, Jasper, Clarke and now portions of
13 Scott and Jones Counties. Senator Thames has served as Chairman
14 of a number of Senate committees and subcommittees since he was
15 first elected. Currently he is serving his second term as
16 Chairman of the Fees, Salaries and Administration Committee and
17 serves as legislative advisor to the State Personnel Board, the
18 Institute for Technology Development, Information Technology
19 Services, and the Public Employees Retirement System. He
20 previously chaired the Agriculture Committee and was Vice Chairman
21 of the Appropriations Committee; and

22 WHEREAS, born April 2, 1944, the son of Leland "Bill" and
23 Cleo Thames, Billy Howard Thames grew up in rural Simpson County
24 just outside of Magee, Mississippi. After graduating from Magee
25 High School and Hinds Community College, he received a degree in
26 Business Administration from the University of Southern
27 Mississippi. In 1969 he established a farm and light industrial

28 equipment business in Mize, Mississippi. A natural salesman, he
29 received the top Agricultural Tractor Sales Award for a five-state
30 area in 1973. Billy also used his love of music and his rich bass
31 voice to direct music in churches for over 25 years. In 1998
32 Senator Thames enrolled in Mississippi State University and in
33 2000 earned a Master's Degree in Public Policy and Administration.
34 He was inducted into Pi Alpha Alpha, the Honor Society for Public
35 Administration. He is also a graduate of the State Executive
36 Development Institute; and

37 WHEREAS, for many years he handled the budget for the
38 Department of Mental Health, becoming familiar with the agency
39 mission and developing a great compassion for the needs of the
40 individuals it serves. He has been instrumental in helping to
41 secure funds to expand services to Mississippi's citizens with
42 mental illness and mental retardation. In 1996 Senator Thames
43 convened a committee to study the needs of persons with mental
44 illness and their families and, as a result, authored the 1997
45 Mental Health Reform Act (Senate Bill No. 2100) which made
46 sweeping changes to mental health service provision, including the
47 creation of the Crisis Intervention Center System. His gift of
48 persuasive public speaking has aided him in advancing many causes
49 near to his heart and the bill passed in one legislative session.
50 For this accomplishment, the Central Mississippi Crisis
51 Intervention Complex was named in his honor; and

52 WHEREAS, a true statesman, Senator Thames has received 29
53 awards as Legislator of the Year and for outstanding service,
54 including the first "Billy H. Thames Award," created by the Mental
55 Health Association which is now given to legislators who make
56 significant contributions to mental health issues; the Mississippi
57 Psychiatric Association; Mississippi Families as Allies; the
58 Southeast Chapter of American Association on Mental Retardation;
59 the Mississippi Mental Health/Mental Retardation Council; the

60 Mississippi Alliance for the Mentally Ill; and most recently the
61 Mississippi Primary Health Care Association; and

62 WHEREAS, as Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Billy was
63 widely known and admired for handling the most difficult issues to
64 come before the Legislature with skillful organization and
65 credibility, including the "chicken bill" and the "hog bill."
66 More recently, he was responsible for enacting the motor vehicle
67 fleet management legislation which had been debated for many
68 years; and

69 WHEREAS, with his many accomplishments, he is most proud of
70 his family: his wife, Ann; his daughters, Lisa Thames Williams
71 and her husband, Mark; Lori Thames; Belinda Thames Arrington and
72 her husband, Jay; and his seven grandchildren: Sidney, Brittney,
73 Jordan, Jace, Haley, Faith and Jaylin; and

74 WHEREAS, Senator Thames' long service was marked by his
75 commitment to success and recognized leadership, and was
76 exemplified by sound judgment and fairness. He set the highest
77 standard in all of his many roles, as a father, husband,
78 grandfather, businessman, citizen, statesman and leader in the
79 Mississippi Senate and as a true friend:

80 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
81 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend and recognize Senator Billy
82 Howard Thames, whose long and outstanding service enriched
83 everyone with whom he was associated, and we wish Billy and his
84 family much success in their future endeavors.

85 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be
86 presented to Senator Billy Thames and be made available to the
87 Capitol Press Corps.