

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Barnett, Burton,
Butler, Fillingane, Frazier, Jackson (11th),
Jackson (32nd), Simmons (12th), Simmons
(13th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 594

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE CIVIL RIGHTS
2 LEGACY OF ROBERT E. JOHNSON OF GRENADA, MISSISSIPPI, AND EXTENDING
3 THE CONDOLENCES OF THE LEGISLATURE TO HIS SURVIVING FAMILY.

4 WHEREAS, we are saddened to learn of the passing of
5 Mississippi Civil Rights Pioneer Robert E. Johnson of Grenada,
6 Mississippi; and

7 WHEREAS, Robert was born to the late Finley and Catherine
8 Johnson on June 17, 1948, in Grenada, Mississippi. Being the
9 sixth of seven children in the poor and segregated Town of
10 Grenada, Robert learned the value of hard work and sacrifice; and

11 WHEREAS, he attended Carrie Dotson High School where he
12 played football, and then entered Alcorn State University
13 (formerly Alcorn College) on a full athletic scholarship. In
14 1966, the emergence of the Meredith March Against Fear would shape
15 the course of Robert's life. Seeing Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.,
16 in the streets of Grenada helped Robert decide that he couldn't
17 let someone else do more for his hometown than he could. Robert
18 came back to Grenada to join the Civil Rights Movement and worked



19 to establish voting rights in Mississippi. He joined the Southern
20 Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) as a Field Project Director
21 after becoming involved in the Movement; and

22 WHEREAS, his fight for Civil Rights with the SCLC led him to
23 various travels throughout the United States and Africa. In 1971,
24 Robert was jailed for refusing to be drafted into the military and
25 was sentenced to five years. By the Grace of God, in 1972 he was
26 released with a full pardon by President Gerald Ford after serving
27 18 months; and

28 WHEREAS, Robert continued his work with the SCLC, which led
29 him to meet his wife, Mary Pitts, in Covington, Georgia. They
30 fell in love and were married in November of 1974. They would
31 later be blessed with two sons, Cleon and Marcus; and

32 WHEREAS, Robert began working for the Metro Atlanta Transit
33 Authority (MARTA) as a Bus Operator in 1979, while also owning his
34 own home construction and repair business. In 1985, Robert
35 started attending Mt. Ephraim Baptist Church, and soon joined the
36 church with his wife and children by his side. Robert served as a
37 Trustee on the Official Board for a number of years. In December
38 of 2002, Robert was ordained as a Deacon of Mt. Ephraim's Official
39 Board. It was during this time Robert, Reverend Dr. Joseph Lowery
40 and other grassroot workers in the Civil Rights Movement were
41 honored with a trip to Durban, South Africa, where they met with
42 South African Activist Nelson Mandela and others. Robert was a



43 devoted servant of his church, family and the African-American
44 community; and

45 WHEREAS, he is preceded in death by his parents and siblings
46 Mildred Brown, George Johnson, Finley Johnson, Jr., and Charles
47 Johnson. An advocate for the less fortunate among us, Robert
48 Johnson was an example to others of how to live your convictions
49 with courage and he will be missed by those who were fortunate to
50 have known his special wisdom:

51 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
52 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
53 we do hereby pay tribute to the Civil Rights legacy of Robert E.
54 Johnson of Grenada, Mississippi, and extend the condolences of the
55 Legislature to his surviving family.

56 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
57 the surviving family of Robert Johnson and be made available to
58 the Capitol Press Corps.

