

By: Senator(s) Suber, Barnett, Barrett,
Chism, McLendon, McMahan, Williams, Jackson
(32nd), Simmons (12th), Simmons (13th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 514

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
2 LEGISLATURE TO THE BEREAVED FAMILY OF THE STATE'S LONGEST-SERVING
3 MAYOR, DOCK GABBERT, WHO SERVED AS MAYOR OF DERMA, MISSISSIPPI,
4 FOR MORE THAN A HALF-CENTURY, AND COMMENDING HIS LEGACY OF PUBLIC
5 SERVICE.

6 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Derma, Mississippi, and the
7 bereaved family in mourning the passing of Mayor Dock Gabbert, 78,
8 who passed away on December 30, 2020, following a brief battle
9 with COVID-19; and

10 WHEREAS, Dock Gabbert was Mississippi's longest-serving
11 Mayor. He had won 14 straight mayoral elections, dating back to
12 1969. Some years he had an opponent. He won one election by just
13 two votes, but most of the time, he ran unopposed; and

14 WHEREAS, in 2014, the Mississippi Municipal League presented
15 Gabbert with a plaque for being the longest-tenured mayor in the
16 state. He wore that label as a badge of honor. He loved his town
17 and did not want to give up on it; and

18 WHEREAS, in 1967, then 24-year-old Gabbert won a special
19 election to fill out the remaining two years of an alderman's term



20 on the board. It was his first taste of city government and
21 small-town politics, but it was far from his last. Back then, the
22 town had gravel streets, two-inch water lines and no sewer system.
23 The city owned just one building, with a wood desk and a
24 two-drawer filing cabinet; and

25 WHEREAS, in 1969, the part-time mayor's position only paid
26 \$10.00 per month. So Gabbert dipped into his own wallet to put
27 paneling in the city building. He also had a phone installed in
28 his name. Gabbert successfully lobbied for grants to get the
29 sanitary sewer system installed. But the bureaucratic process
30 took several years. As work on that project got underway,
31 Gabbert's second term was nearing its end. So he ran again. And
32 again. And again; and

33 WHEREAS, in the last 100 years, Derma has had 11 mayors.
34 Four had terms of one year or less. Two served for 17 or more
35 years. Only Gabbert has served more than 20. The summer of 2021
36 would have seen the end of his 52nd year as Mayor; and

37 WHEREAS, being Mayor for more than a half-century gave city
38 projects continuity. It allowed Gabbert to find grants when
39 available to continue to improve the town, a distinction he
40 believed gave his beloved small town a sense of consistency; and

41 WHEREAS, we pay tribute and cherish fondly the memory of this
42 most public-spirited citizen of Mississippi who leaves a legacy of
43 enormous civic energy, and will be missed:



44 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
45 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
46 we do hereby extend the sympathy of the Legislature to the
47 bereaved family of the state's longest-serving Mayor, Dock
48 Gabbert, who served as Mayor of Derma, Mississippi, for more than
49 a half-century, and commend his legacy of public service.

50 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
51 the surviving family of Mayor Dock Gabbert, forwarded to the Board
52 of Aldermen and the Mississippi Municipal League, and made
53 available to the Capitol Press Corps.

