

By: Representatives McLean, Karriem, Wright To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 87

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
2 OF THE FOUNDING OF THE COMMERCIAL DISPATCH NEWSPAPER ON MARCH 12,
3 1922, IN COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI, THE ONLY FAMILY-OWNED DAILY
4 NEWSPAPER IN THE STATE, AND RECOGNIZING ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE
5 COMMUNITY AND TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI.

6 WHEREAS, we join the citizens of Columbus, Mississippi, in
7 commemorating the 100th anniversary of the founding of *The*
8 *Commercial Dispatch* newspaper and recognizing the civic
9 contributions of this leading corporate citizen in our state; and

10 WHEREAS, in 1922, Vinton Birney Imes had some ambitious plans
11 at only 33 years old, but no clear timetable to complete them,
12 already having left his position with *The Columbus Dispatch* in
13 1921 to purchase *The Columbus Commercial*; and a year later, backed
14 by the financing of a local judge, Mr. Imes purchased his old
15 newspaper, *The Columbus Dispatch*, from the Maer family; and

16 WHEREAS, newspapers had operated in Columbus as far back as
17 1833, coming and going, merging and changing names; and on March
18 12, 1922, the first edition of the consolidated newspapers rolled



19 off the press under the banner *The Commercial Dispatch*, with
20 Birney Imes as its editor and publisher; and

21 WHEREAS, March 12, 2022, marked the 100th anniversary of what
22 is now known as *The Commercial Dispatch*, and it is the second
23 birthday the paper recognizes, along with the 1879 founding of *The*
24 *Columbus Dispatch*, the earliest forerunner of today's newspaper;
25 and

26 WHEREAS, beginning with Birney Imes, the newspaper has been
27 edited and published by four generations of the Imes family,
28 including the current editor/publisher Peter Imes, who took over
29 the role in 2018, and it is now the only family-owned daily
30 newspaper in the state; and

31 WHEREAS, upon Birney Imes' death in 1947, Birney Imes, Jr.,
32 took over as editor and publisher at age 33, the same age as his
33 father when he published the first edition of *The Commercial*
34 *Dispatch*, and Birney Jr. would go on to serve as editor and
35 publisher for 51 years; and

36 WHEREAS, in 1998, Birney Imes III took over as editor and
37 publisher, inheriting the position at a time that seems far
38 removed from that of his grandfather, a time when newspapers were
39 virtually the only source of news on daily events of not only
40 Columbus but the nation and the world; and, in 1925, *The*
41 *Commercial Dispatch* moved to its present location on Main Street,
42 where in those days before radio and television, the newspaper was
43 a beehive of activity during elections and public events and for



44 many years a chalkboard was set up in front of *The Dispatch* to
45 tally election returns as they came in; and

46 WHEREAS, "The 100th anniversary of *The Commercial Dispatch*
47 celebrates far more than four generations of a family business,"
48 Peter Imes said, "When I pause to consider the history of the
49 company, I always think of the thousands and thousands of people
50 who have worked here or delivered papers for us. For most of the
51 ones I've talked to, it was, in one way or another, a notable
52 period of their life. People who have clocked in at *The Dispatch*
53 have gone on to be entrepreneurs, university presidents, mayors,
54 teachers and police officers. In the early days, there were a lot
55 of young up-and-coming people who loved what we did and worked so
56 hard. They came into work when they didn't have to and went the
57 extra mile and won a lot of awards for their work. Those were
58 exciting years and a period of growth for all of Columbus."; and

59 WHEREAS, that commitment to excellence has not changed, and
60 the paper's newsroom won the top award in the state last year and
61 its advertising department has won the top award the past two
62 years; and

63 WHEREAS, Birney Imes kicked off the first 100 years of *The*
64 *Commercial Dispatch* and Peter Imes is on the clock for the second
65 100 years; and Peter Imes said, "Whether it's *The Dispatch* or some
66 other source, I just hope there's a third party to hold government
67 accountable and report and interpret the news. But I do think
68 there will be a *Dispatch* in 100 years"; and



69 WHEREAS, established in 1819, the City of Columbus has been a
70 leading, progressive agricultural community in the Golden Triangle
71 Region of Mississippi, which throughout its history has been
72 supported by the leadership of its most public-spirited corporate
73 citizen, *The Dispatch*, whose civic energy is a wonderful example
74 of excellent journalism in the State of Mississippi:

75 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
76 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
77 THEREIN, That we do hereby commemorate the 100th anniversary of
78 the founding of *The Commercial Dispatch* newspaper (1922-2022) in
79 Columbus, Mississippi, the only family-owned daily newspaper in
80 the state, and recognize its contributions to the community and to
81 the State of Mississippi, and extend best wishes to the staff of
82 this leading newspaper on this auspicious occasion.

83 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
84 furnished to Peter Imes and the staff of *The Commercial Dispatch*,
85 the Mayor and City Council of the City of Columbus, and to the
86 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

