

By: Senator(s) Younger, Bryan, Butler
(38th), Jackson (11th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 584

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY
2 OF THE FOUNDING OF *THE COLUMBUS COMMERCIAL DISPATCH* NEWSPAPER
3 (1921-2022) IN COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI, THE ONLY FAMILY-OWNED
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 *Columbus Commercial Dispatch* Newspaper and recognizing the civic
9 contributions of this leading corporate citizen in our state; and

10 WHEREAS, Vinton Birney Imes had some ambitious plans. He was
11 just 33 years old, but already a 12-year veteran of the newspaper
12 business. In 1921, he left his position with *The Columbus*
13 *Dispatch* to purchase *The Columbus Commercial*. A year later,
14 backed by the financing of a local judge, 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. On March 12,
18 1922, the first edition of the consolidated newspapers rolled off



19 the press under the banner *The Commercial Dispatch*, with Birney
20 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*. It is the second
23 "birthday" the paper recognizes, along with the 1879 founding of
24 *The Columbus Dispatch*, the earliest forerunner of today's
25 newspaper. Beginning with Birney Imes, the newspaper has been
26 edited and published by four generations of the Imes family,
27 including the current Editor/Publisher Peter Imes, who took over
28 the role in 2018. It is now the only family-owned daily newspaper
29 in the state; and

30 WHEREAS, in 1996, Birney Imes III took over as Editor and
31 Publisher, inheriting the position at a time that seems far
32 removed from that of his grandfather, a time when newspapers were
33 virtually the only source of news on daily events of not only
34 Columbus, but the nation and world. In 1925, *The Commercial*
35 *Dispatch* moved to its present location on Main Street. In those
36 days before radio and TV, the newspaper was a beehive of activity
37 during elections and public events. For many years a chalkboard
38 was set up in front of *The Dispatch* to tally election returns as
39 they came in; and

40 WHEREAS, "The 100th Anniversary of *The Commercial Dispatch*
41 celebrates far more than four generations of a family business,"
42 Peter Imes said. "When I pause to consider the history of the
43 company, I always think of the thousands and thousands of people



44 who have worked here or delivered papers for us. For most of the
45 ones I've talked to, it was, in one way or another, a notable
46 period of their life. People who have clocked in at *The Dispatch*
47 have gone on to be entrepreneurs, university presidents, mayors,
48 teachers and police officers. In the early days, there were a lot
49 of young up-and-coming people who loved what we did and worked so
50 hard. They came into work when they didn't have to and went the
51 extra mile and won a lot of awards for their work. Those were
52 exciting years and a period of growth for all of Columbus." That
53 commitment to excellence hasn't changed. The paper's newsroom has
54 won the top award in the state, and its advertising department has
55 won the top award the past two years; and

56 WHEREAS, Birney Imes handled the first 100 years of *The*
57 *Commercial Dispatch* and Peter Imes for the second 100 years. Imes
58 said, "Whether it's *The Dispatch* or some other source, I just hope
59 there's a third party to hold government accountable and report
60 and interpret the news. But I do think there will be a *Dispatch*
61 in 100 years"; and

62 WHEREAS, established in 1819, the City of Columbus has been a
63 leading, progressive agricultural community in the Golden Triangle
64 Region of Central Mississippi, which throughout its history has
65 been supported by the leadership of its most public-spirited
66 corporate citizen, *The Commercial Dispatch*, whose civic energy is
67 a wonderful example of excellent journalism in the State of
68 Mississippi:



69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
70 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
71 we do hereby commemorate the 100th Anniversary of the founding of
72 *The Columbus Commercial Dispatch* Newspaper (1921-2022) in
73 Columbus, Mississippi, the only family-owned newspaper in the
74 state, and recognize its contributions to the community and to the
75 State of Mississippi, and extend our best wishes to the staff of
76 this leading newspaper on this auspicious occasion.

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
78 Peter Imes and the staff of *The Commercial Dispatch*, forwarded to
79 the City Council of the City of Columbus, and made available to
80 the Capitol Press Corps.

