

By: Senator(s) Williams

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 562

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO DESIGNATE OCTOBER 2023 AS "WALKER
2 MONTGOMERY NATIONAL CATFISHING AWARENESS MONTH IN MISSISSIPPI" TO
3 BRING ATTENTION TO THE VICTIMS OF CATFISHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND
4 TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF MENTAL HEALTH TO DEVELOP
5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE LEGISLATURE.

6 WHEREAS, "Catfishing" is the deceptive practice of using
7 images and information (often taken from other people's social
8 media accounts) to create a new identity online, sometimes
9 stealing an individual's entire identity as their own; and

10 WHEREAS, the term "catfishing" refers to dating, social media
11 site scams, in which scammers create a fictitious online social
12 media identity and use it to gain the trust of victims with the
13 promise of romance or sex with the actual goal being to
14 emotionally distress, glean money or steal personal information
15 from victims. The term has been normalized by reality TV shows
16 and widespread media coverage in recent years; and

17 WHEREAS, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation,
18 the number of romance scams and confidence scams increased
19 dramatically by 22% by 2020. The pandemic created ideal



20 conditions for such scams to thrive, as many individuals were
21 searching for ways to connect with others and scammers could
22 create believable excuses for being unable to meet in public; and

23 WHEREAS, although catfishing used to be seen more among
24 adults using online dating platforms, it has now become a
25 widespread problem among teenagers as well. Some want to trick
26 others into falling in love with them, for personal satisfaction,
27 while others will say or do whatever it takes for victims to give
28 them money. Catfish lack integrity and concern about their
29 victim's well-being. While victims suffer, the individual, who
30 owns the stolen photos that the catfish used, may also experience
31 stress; and

32 WHEREAS, Catfish Awareness Month is about protecting daters,
33 online users and gamers from being tricked by anyone who isn't who
34 they claim to be:

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
36 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
37 we do hereby designate October 2023 as "Walker Montgomery National
38 Catfishing Awareness Month in Mississippi" to bring attention to
39 the victims of "catfishing" on social media.

40 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the State Board of Mental Health
41 is authorized and directed to develop a report to the 2024 Regular
42 Session of the Legislature defining the problem of "catfishing on
43 social media" with emphasis on the effects of this activity on



44 young adults in our state, with recommendations on appropriate
45 corrective programs and legislation.

46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
47 the family of Walker Montgomery, transmitted to the State Board of
48 Mental Health for proper dissemination, and made available to the
49 Capitol Press Corps.

