

By: Senator(s) Wiggins, England, Simmons
(12th), Berry, Boyd, DeBar, Frazier, Hopson,
McCaughn, McLendon, Michel, Norwood, Seymour,
Sparks, Suber, Thompson

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 518

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND CELEBRATING THE
2 CONTRIBUTIONS AND CAREER OF MISSISSIPPI MUSIC ICON AND TROPICAL
3 ROCK LEGEND AND USM ALUMNUS JIMMY BUFFETT OF PASCAGOULA,
4 MISSISSIPPI, WHO CREATED HIS OWN GENRE OF MUSIC AND A WORLDWIDE
5 MUSIC BUSINESS EMPIRE, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
6 LEGISLATURE ON THE PASSING OF THIS MISSISSIPPI MUSIC LEGEND.

7 WHEREAS, Jimmy Buffett, the iconic Mississippi musician and
8 celebrated music industry mogul, whose laid-back vibe built a
9 music empire, passed away on September 1, 2023, at age 76; and

10 WHEREAS, Buffett enjoyed a 50-plus year recording career that
11 generated unparalleled devotion from fans, famously known as
12 "Parrotheads." Buffett was actually an astute, ambitious,
13 aggressive businessman. His development of branded restaurants,
14 books, beer, resorts, a Broadway show and a cruise line
15 established Buffett a bona fide mogul; and

16 WHEREAS, "Wastin' away in Margaritaville," was the chorus of
17 his most famous song, which became an international singalong.
18 Buffett built an empire based largely on what is now known as
19 "Gulf and Western" or "Tropical Rock" music that celebrated the



20 Gulf of Mexico life, sunshine and nightlife. He memorialized his
21 home state with songs like "Pascagoula Run" and "Biloxi"; and

22 WHEREAS, Buffett was born on Christmas Day, 1946, in
23 Pascagoula, Mississippi, where family and friends continue to
24 live. He once said he arrived in the Florida Keys driving a 1946
25 Packard in about 1970 and found his musical niche during that
26 decade with breezy, island-influenced party tunes. He became a
27 pop star in 1977, when "Margaritaville" cracked the Top 10. The
28 song has provided a soundtrack to countless happy hours in the
29 decades since; and

30 WHEREAS, Buffett's 1992 collection titled *Boats, Beaches,*
31 *Bars, and Ballads* became one of the best-selling box sets ever and
32 his annual summer concert tours with his Coral Reefer Band became
33 major events, drawing thousands of "Parrotheads" who would dress
34 up in Hawaiian shirts, leis, funny hats and other mellow party
35 accessories. Some would follow Buffet's tour from city to city;
36 and

37 WHEREAS, business success soon eclipsed record sales.
38 According to Buffett's website, the first Margaritaville
39 restaurant opened in Key West, Florida, in 1987. The chain grew
40 to 16 outlets and Harrah's Entertainment, Inc., teamed up with
41 Buffett to develop the \$700 million Margaritaville Casino & Resort
42 in Biloxi, Mississippi, near where he was raised. Regardless of
43 his commercial achievements, Buffett's legacy will be, in his
44 words, "helping people forget their troubles for a couple of



45 hours." The singer told the *Baltimore Sun* in 1999 that his
46 optimistic view of life brought fans to the humor and escapism in
47 his work. And that was OK, because there already was enough
48 serious material in the world. "I was the life of the party,"
49 Buffett said; and

50 WHEREAS, evidencing his all-around great business acumen, he
51 became involved in such products as Landshark Lager, the
52 Margaritaville and Cheeseburger in Paradise restaurant chains,
53 boat shoes, salsa, hummus, tortillas, dips, tequila and blenders;
54 and

55 WHEREAS, Buffett was chairman of Margaritaville Holdings
56 based in Palm Beach, Florida. He had a restaurant and a casino in
57 Vegas, a casino in Mississippi and a hotel in Pensacola Beach,
58 Florida; and

59 WHEREAS, along with hit songs, Buffett wrote best-selling
60 novels. In 2008 he was ranked by *Vanity Fair* as No. 97 on a list
61 of the 100 most influential people in the world, and his fan base
62 was broad and loyal. Even when he was in his 60s, his concert
63 tickets fetched more than \$100.00. "I'm not about to apologize
64 for being a good businessman," Buffett told the *Washington Post* in
65 1998. "Too many people in music have ruined their lives because
66 they weren't. I'm not a great singer, and I'm only a so-so guitar
67 player. I started running the band years ago because nobody else
68 could, and I turned out to be good at this stuff. There's never
69 been any grand plan to this thing. I'm making it up as I go



70 along. Just trying to work the system while maintaining my '60s
71 anarchic soul"; and

72 WHEREAS, after Jimmy Buffett's death, the Southern Miss
73 football team honored its celebrated alumnus. Southern Miss
74 hosted Alcorn State at M.M. Roberts Stadium to kick off the 2023
75 season. Many Golden Eagles fans paid tribute to Buffett by
76 sporting baseball jerseys the school unveiled during the 2011
77 season. As part of "Parrothead Night at The Pete," the Southern
78 Miss baseball team wore the pastel blue jerseys for the first time
79 against the University of New Orleans on April 15, 2011. Before a
80 moment of silence was held, the public address announcer said "The
81 University of Southern Mississippi joins the world in mourning his
82 loss and reminds everyone as Jimmy would sing to you, 'Just enjoy
83 this ride on my trip around the sun until it is done'"; and

84 WHEREAS, a proud supporter of his alma mater, Buffett, a
85 native of Pascagoula, Mississippi, earned a degree in history from
86 the university, where he was a member of the Kappa Sigma
87 fraternity. A bronze marker located near "The Hub," a historic
88 center of student activity on the Hattiesburg campus, notes where
89 he met musical collaborator Greg "Fingers" Taylor, who together
90 founded the longtime chart-topping song machine "The Coral Reefer
91 Band"; and

92 WHEREAS, on September 15, 2015, Jimmy Buffett returned to his
93 birthplace, where the City of Pascagoula honored him with the
94 dedication of a small, yet significant bridge that crosses over



95 the murky waters of Baptiste Bayou as it flows through the
96 Mississippi Sound and into the Gulf of Mexico. The bridge, this
97 particular bayou and location help signify the humble beginnings
98 of Buffet and what he has become to mean to so many adoring and
99 loyal fans. While visiting his grandparents' home on Parsley
100 Avenue, Jimmy's grandfather, a ship captain, pulled out one of his
101 treasured maps to share with his grandson. They took a brief walk
102 to the nearby bayou, and his grandfather discussed with Jimmy
103 something that would impact his life forever. Jimmy, the 'Son of
104 a Son of a Sailor,' was told that bayou led to the rest of the
105 world. He was told, "The world is yours if you want it to be" and
106 at the dedication, he was met by a few thousand waiting fans and
107 beautiful blue skies. Once on the stage, the City of Pascagoula
108 presented Buffett with several honors. Mayor Jim Blevins
109 presented Buffet with a key to the city, and the bridge over
110 Baptiste Bayou was officially renamed the "Jimmy Buffett Bridge."
111 The Mississippi State Legislature also proclaimed May 6 as "Jimmy
112 Buffett Day" in honor of the wedding anniversary of Buffetts'
113 parents, James Jr., and Mary Buffett. Also presented to Buffett
114 was the sign that would be erected at Pascagoula's three
115 entrances. A sign that will proudly share with each passerby that
116 Pascagoula is the birthplace of Jimmy Buffett; and

117 WHEREAS, following the official ceremony, the band of two -
118 Buffett and Mac McAnnally played nine songs that were fitting
119 choices making reference to Pascagoula and the Gulf Coast.



120 Buffett quoted Mark Twain by saying, "You write what you know
121 about." First up was his song "Pascagoula Run" from the 1989
122 album *Off to See the Lizard*, since it clearly uses Pascagoula
123 within its title. The set continued with "Life is Just a Tire
124 Swing," "Son of a Son of a Sailor," "Bama Breeze" and, of course,
125 "Margaritaville." The show ended on a much loved and emotional
126 note with Buffett's ode to his grandfather, "The Captain and the
127 Kid." The City of Pascagoula, the Gulf Coast and the entire
128 region has much appreciation for Jimmy Buffett and is happy to
129 call him one of its own; and

130 WHEREAS, Jimmy Buffett, Mac McAnally and the late B.B. King
131 were among the inductees to the 2020 Mississippi Songwriter Hall
132 of Fame. At the induction ceremony Pascagoula Mayor Steve
133 Demetropoulos congratulated Buffett, who was born in the city on
134 the Mississippi Gulf Coast. "It's been said that Mississippi is
135 the birth place of America's music. Well, Jimmy Buffett is
136 America's music." Buffett responded, "It's a long way from the
137 Pascagoula run, and my early days growing up in Mississippi
138 certainly had an impact on the way I wrote songs and what I wrote
139 about. So, thank you Mississippi for that";

140 WHEREAS, Jimmy Buffett is survived by his wife of 46 years,
141 Jane (Slagsvol) Buffett; daughters, Savannah Jane (Joshua) and
142 Sarah Delaney; son, Cameron Marley (Lara); grandson, Marley Ray;
143 his Montana sister, Laurie Buffett McGuane (Tom); their children,
144 Heather Hume, Anne Buffett McGuane, Maggie McGuane and Thomas



145 McGuane IV; his Alabama sister, Lucy Buffett and daughters, Mara
146 Delaney Buffett O'Dwyer and Melanie Leigh Buffett; and many more
147 wonderful cousins, nieces and nephews; and

148 WHEREAS, Jimmy Buffett will be celebrated for his impact on
149 Mississippi, American pop culture and his own style of rock music:

150 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
151 MISSISSIPPI, That we mourn the loss and celebrate the
152 contributions and career of Mississippi music icon and Tropical
153 Rock legend and USM alumnus Jimmy Buffett of Pascagoula,
154 Mississippi, who created his own genre of music and a worldwide
155 music business empire, and express the sympathy of the Legislature
156 on the passing of this Mississippi music legend.

157 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED That this resolution be presented to
158 the surviving family of Jimmy Buffett, forwarded to the
159 Mississippi Music Hall of Fame and the National Rock & Roll Hall
160 of Fame and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

