

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Barnett, Chassaniol,  
McCaughn

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 11

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI  
2 SENATE TO INTERNATIONALLY KNOWN PUPPET ARTS THEATRE DIRECTOR PETER  
3 ZAPLETAL AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2024 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARD FOR  
4 EXCELLENCE IN PERFORMING ARTS.

5 WHEREAS, the Governor's Arts Awards Program has announced its  
6 2024 recipients, which include internationally known Puppet Arts  
7 Theatre Director Peter Zapletal as the 2024 Governor's Arts Award  
8 recipient for Excellence in Performing Arts; and

9 WHEREAS, established in 1988, Governor's Arts Awards are  
10 given to individuals and organizations to recognize outstanding  
11 work in the artistic disciplines, as well as arts-based community  
12 development and arts patronage in Mississippi. The awards are  
13 presented in partnership with the Governor's Office and signify  
14 the important relationship between government and the arts; and

15 WHEREAS, the Artistic Director for Puppet Arts Theatre, Peter  
16 Zapletal, grew up in former Czechoslovakia, recognized as the  
17 world center of modern puppetry. After graduating with a Master's  
18 Degree in Puppetry from the Academy of the Performing Arts in  
19 Prague, he joined the professional puppet theatre in Zilina,



20 Slovakia. Soon afterwards, he and his family emigrated to New  
21 York, where he and his wife, Jarmila, immediately started to  
22 produce puppet performances; and

23 WHEREAS, by 1970 he was recognized in a New York Times  
24 article as a talent to watch. But his path took a turn south and  
25 he moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he joined the local PBS  
26 station as a puppeteer in residence. During the next 32 years, he  
27 created many instructional and special programs with and without  
28 puppets. His instructional programs were seen in classrooms  
29 across the United States, and special programs, from *Beauty and*  
30 *the Beast* to *The Steadfast Tin Soldier* with Burl Ives to *Bolero* (a  
31 ballet special), were broadcast by PBS stations; and

32 WHEREAS, Peter Zapletal garnered more than 50 national  
33 awards, among them five Emmy Awards for *Ticktock Minutes*, the  
34 Silver Circle Award from the National Academy of Television Arts  
35 and Sciences for 25 years of excellence in television puppetry,  
36 and the Puppeteers of America Award for high standards and  
37 continued excellence in puppetry; and

38 WHEREAS, in addition to his television work, he and his wife,  
39 Jarmila, also produced many shows in Puppet Arts Theatre tours  
40 throughout the Southeast, offering magical and exciting theatrical  
41 experiences. Those tours took him and the company from Southaven  
42 in the north to Gulfport in the south, from Vicksburg in the west  
43 to Meridian in the east, and everywhere in between. In Tupelo,  
44 Oxford, Laurel, Hattiesburg, Biloxi or Poplarville, where there



45 were schools with an interest in bringing live performances,  
46 Puppet Arts Theatre was there; and

47 WHEREAS, Mr. Zapletal's other professional activities include  
48 stage directing Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Telephone* and *The Medium*,  
49 operas with Opera South at Jackson State University, directing  
50 *Hansel & Gretel* and *The Golem* with the Millsaps Players at  
51 Millsaps College, serving as President of Union Internationale de  
52 la Marionette – USA, Inc., Artistic Director for three National  
53 Festivals of the Puppeteers of America, and as Artistic  
54 Coordinator for the 1980 World Puppetry Festival at the Kennedy  
55 Center for Performing Arts, in Washington, D.C.; and

56 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute and  
57 express appreciation for the talent of a Mississippi performing  
58 arts director who has made Mississippi a better place and  
59 exemplifies the artistic traditions of our great state:

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
61 MISSISSIPPI, That we hereby extend the recognition of the  
62 Mississippi Senate to internationally known Puppet Arts Theatre  
63 Director Peter Zapletal as the recipient of the 2024 Governor's  
64 Arts Award for Excellence in Performing Arts and extend our  
65 congratulations to a theatric leader on this auspicious occasion.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
67 Peter Zapletal as part of the Governor's Arts Awards presentation  
68 and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

