

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

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 13

1 A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE RECOGNITION OF THE MISSISSIPPI
2 SENATE TO INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED PIANIST, SINGER-SONGWRITER,
3 MUSIC PRODUCER AND ACTOR EARL POOLE BALL, JR., OF AUSTIN, TEXAS,
4 AS THE RECIPIENT OF THE 2024 GOVERNOR'S ARTS AWARD FOR LIFETIME
5 ACHIEVEMENT.

6 WHEREAS, the Governor's Arts Awards Program has announced its
7 2024 recipients, which include internationally renowned Pianist,
8 Singer-Songwriter, Music Producer and Actor Earl Poole Ball, Jr.,
9 of Austin, Texas, as the recipient of the 2024 Governor's Arts
10 Award for Lifetime Achievement; and

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

17 WHEREAS, Earl Poole Ball, Jr., (March 12, 1941) is a Pianist,
18 Singer-Songwriter, Music Producer and Actor. His musical work
19 spans the Americana, Country, Gospel and Rockabilly genres; and



20 WHEREAS, he has recorded and performed with Buck Owens and
21 the Buckaroos, Gram Parsons' "International Submarine Band," Merle
22 Haggard, Carl Perkins, Marty Stuart, Freddie Hart, Phil Ochs,
23 Michael Nesmith, Marty Robbins, Wynn Stewart, the Flying Burrito
24 Brothers and on the Byrds iconic album *Sweetheart of the Rodeo*.
25 He is best known for the 20 years he spent touring and recording
26 with Johnny Cash; and

27 WHEREAS, Ball hails from Foxworth, Mississippi, where his
28 aunt, Kathryn Ball, taught him how to play the piano at the
29 Foxworth First Baptist Church. Later he learned how to play the
30 popular country and early rockabilly songs on the radio and was a
31 part of a local Columbia band called the Hill Cats. Ball
32 auditioned for Jimmy Swan's Country Dance Band and got the job
33 hitch-hiking back and forth to Hattiesburg to play on television.
34 The McCaffrey Supermarket sponsored the "Jimmy Swan Show" where he
35 met a young Eddie Hodges and family. He performed in the local
36 bars while in high school and afterward and supplemented his music
37 career by selling Fuller Brushes door to door; and

38 WHEREAS, at age 20, his father gave him a bus ticket to his
39 chosen destination of Houston, Texas, where he honed his craft
40 after meeting Mickey Gilley, who showed him the ropes of survival
41 in the world of honky-tonk piano players. Gilley remained a
42 lifelong friend; and

43 WHEREAS, while spending three years in Houston where a young
44 Glen Campbell sat in with his band "The Shades," Ball worked four



45 or five nights in the bars and sold sewing machines in the day and
46 finally bought a car. Ball then traveled to Southern California
47 where he looked up his pal Eddie Hodges and another friend from
48 Texas, Dick Stubbs, and found work in the lively country music
49 scene in clubs and on local television. Studio work soon
50 followed, and he was called for many recording sessions at
51 Columbia, RCA and Capitol Records. The newly founded Academy Of
52 Country Music named Ball "Piano Player of the Year" in 1967 and
53 1968; and

54 WHEREAS, while working for Cliffie Stone's Central Songs
55 Music, Ball suggested the song his friends had written "Try A
56 Little Kindness" to his old friend Glen Campbell for a number one
57 hit; and

58 WHEREAS, in 1969, Ball was offered an executive position with
59 Capitol records as assistant to the vice president in charge of
60 country music, the legendary Ken Nelson. In addition to his other
61 duties filling in for Nelson, he produced the most memorable
62 *Tribute to the World's Best Damn Fiddle Player* album (or, *My*
63 *Salute to Bob Wills*) by the great Merle Haggard; and

64 WHEREAS, in 1972, Ball was made a full producer and
65 transferred to the Nashville office where he took over the
66 responsibility of producing the hottest act in country music at
67 that time, Freddie Hart. He was able to follow up Hart's smash
68 "Easy Loving" with a number one hit for six weeks "My Hang-Up Is
69 You" followed by two more number one singles and albums; and



70 WHEREAS, Ball continued to play at recording sessions as a
71 pianist and was referred to Johnny Cash by the great songwriter
72 Harlan Howard. Cash offered Ball a position in his traveling show
73 just as Ball was finding that the corporate life was not the joy
74 he had hoped for, and he missed the thrill of performing for live
75 audiences. A deal was struck, and Ball traveled with the Cash
76 show doing recordings and television for the next 20 years, also
77 producing the remarkable Cash album *Rockabilly Blues* in 1980; and

78 WHEREAS, when asked to contribute a song to the famed Movie
79 Director Peter Bogdanovich's latest film in 1980 *They All Laughed*
80 starring Audrey Hepburn and Ben Gazzara, Ball was hired on as the
81 Band Leader in the film and a musical friendship was formed.
82 Bogdanovich and Ball would write several songs for subsequent
83 films such as *The Thing Called Love* starring River Phoenix and
84 *Texasville*, where Ball also had a role as an actor appearing as
85 Junior Nolan, Jeff Bridges' pal. Ball also acted with Andy
86 Griffith and Cash in the made for TV movie *Murder in Coweta County*
87 directed by Gary Nelson, who also became a very close friend; and

88 WHEREAS, since 1999, Ball continues to do studio work, and to
89 make music with his band "Earl Poole Ball and The Fantabulous
90 Friends." He also performs with the "Hey Bale" band and is
91 working on his autobiography. He currently resides in Austin,
92 Texas; and

93 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we pay tribute and
94 express appreciation for the talent of a Mississippi-born artistic



95 leader who has made Mississippi a better place and exemplifies the
96 artistic traditions of our great state:

97 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
98 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby extend the recognition of the
99 Mississippi Senate to Internationally Renowned Pianist,
100 Singer-Songwriter, Music Producer and Actor Earl Poole Ball, Jr.,
101 of Austin, Texas, as the recipient of the 2024 Governor's Arts
102 Award for Lifetime Achievement and extend our congratulations to a
103 Mississippi-born artistic leader on this auspicious occasion.

104 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
105 Earl Poole Ball as part of the Governor's Arts Awards presentation
106 and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

