

By: Senator(s) Harden, White (29th)

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 587

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE LIFE AND CAREER OF
2 MARK F. SMITH, LONGTIME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE COALITION FOR
3 CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES, AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE
4 LEGISLATURE.

5 WHEREAS, longtime Executive Director of the Mississippi
6 Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities Mark F. Smith passed away
7 on Monday, February 25, 2002; and

8 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was the Executive Director of the
9 Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities since 1992. Under his
10 leadership, disability groups throughout Mississippi were
11 organized to push for improvements to service systems and to
12 provide additional opportunities in health care, home- and
13 community-based services, housing, education, transportation and
14 employment; and

15 WHEREAS, prior to his work with the Coalition, Mr. Smith was
16 employed by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services
17 as Director of the Office of Special Services for Individuals with
18 Disabilities, Program Director of Special Projects, Program
19 Coordinator of Grants and Program Development, Facility Manager of
20 Allied Enterprises of Rankin County, and Vocational Evaluator for
21 the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. He was a graduate of the
22 University of Southern Mississippi and received a Master's Degree
23 from Mississippi State University; and

24 WHEREAS, Mark Smith was a gifted grants writer and was
25 responsible for bringing millions of dollars into Mississippi for
26 the establishment and expansion of programs of service for people
27 with disabilities. He was instrumental in establishing a system
28 of independent living centers, Living Independence For Everyone



29 (LIFE) of Mississippi, and served as the Project Director of this
30 program for many years; and

31 WHEREAS, he developed and administered many innovative
32 programs employing and assisting people with disabilities
33 including AmeriCorps MPOWERS (Mississippians Promoting
34 Opportunities for Work, Equality, and Renewal) with the
35 Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Services; Healthy Futures;
36 Adolescent Transition in Mississippi; and Mississippi ADA
37 (Americans with Disabilities Act) Network affiliated with the
38 Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center; and

39 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith was particularly proud of his work with
40 youth with disabilities as a sponsor and coach for the Challenger
41 League. In recent years, under his leadership, the Coalition
42 hosted the Spirit of the ADA Torch Relay providing over 140
43 individuals with disabilities the opportunity to "carry the torch"
44 for employment; conducted a series of Job Fairs for people with
45 disabilities; and hosted two highly successful Youth Leadership
46 Conferences for adolescents with disabilities and their families;
47 and

48 WHEREAS, he was the National Truth Team Coordinator for
49 Justice For All, a national advocacy organization. During the
50 11th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act on July
51 26, 2001, Mr. Smith was awarded the national "Justice For All
52 Disability Rights Award." He was one of the only grassroots
53 leaders being recognized along with other honorees, former Senator
54 Bob Dole, Senator Tom Harkin, Senator Orrin Hatch and Senator Ted
55 Kennedy; and

56 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith served on a number of national and state
57 boards for disability organizations. He was a tireless worker and
58 received many other honors and awards; and

59 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith's legacy will be the thousands of people
60 whose lives he touched. He worked unceasingly to help others. He
61 saw the best in everyone. His diligence and devotion were



62 unparalleled. Because of his vision and his efforts, he left the
63 world a better place; and

64 WHEREAS, Mr. Smith is survived by his wife, Denise Bowman
65 Smith of Jackson; daughter, Erin McPeak of Laurel; grand-daughter,
66 Lydia McPeak; two brothers, Mathew Smith of Walnut Creek,
67 California, and Rev. Jerry Smith of New Orleans, Louisiana; and
68 nephews and nieces; and

69 WHEREAS, it is with sadness that we note the passing of this
70 dedicated public servant and advocate, whose contributions to his
71 community and state will serve as a model for us all:

72 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
73 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
74 we do hereby commend the life and career of Mark F. Smith,
75 longtime Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition for
76 Citizens with Disabilities, and do hereby express the sympathy of
77 the Legislature on his passing.

78 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
79 the surviving family of Mark Smith, be forwarded to the Coalition
80 for Citizens with Disabilities and be made available to the
81 Capitol Press Corps.

