

Chapter No. 2230  
11/SS26/R1361  
JN /As/SG

***SENATE***  
***CONCURRENT RESOLUTION***  
***No. 659***

Originated in Senate \_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 659

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING LESTER JAMES SPELL, JR., D.V.M., FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT FROM PUBLIC SERVICE.

WHEREAS, Lester Spell, Jr., has faithfully served in various capacities of public service to the citizens of the State of Mississippi for over 35 years, and it is with appreciation that we recognize his dedication and devotion upon his retirement; and

WHEREAS, a native of Rankin County, Dr. Spell graduated from Murrah High School and attended Mississippi State University in pre-veterinary medicine before continuing his education at Auburn University, receiving his Doctorate of Veterinary Medicine Degree in 1968; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Spell served for two years as a Captain in the United States Army, supervising the inspection of perishable food shipped to Vietnam; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Spell maintained a private veterinary practice in Richland, Mississippi, for 26 years and was designated Veterinarian of the Year by the Mississippi Veterinarian Association; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Spell was elected in his hometown of Richland, Mississippi, as its first Mayor upon incorporation in 1975, where he served as mayor until 1996 overseeing phenomenal business and industrial growth, and was inducted into the Mississippi Municipal League's Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Spell became Mississippi's Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce and began serving as Commissioner in 1996 and during his tenure he brought the Department of Agriculture and

Commerce into the 21st Century by thoroughly reorganizing and automating the agency in ways that allowed the department to efficiently and effectively provide 20% more measureable service with 1/3 fewer employees, resulting in savings in excess of \$50 Million in personnel costs during the 16 years since 1996; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Spell's leadership has led to numerous new initiatives including the "Make Mine Mississippi" program that identifies and promotes items substantially produced in the state by more than 1,000 Mississippi companies; the merger of the Agricultural Aviation Board, the Central Farmers' Market and the Bureau of Plant Industry into the department; the expansion of opportunities for specialty crop farmers; a heightened awareness of American-grown products with Country-of-Origin Labeling; the initiation of the Farm-to-School program to bring fresh produce to Mississippi school children; the promotion of 54 farmers' markets across the state; the assistance to farmer-driven check-off programs serving the commodities of corn, soybeans, rice, and peanuts; the support of youth-related agricultural organizations across the state; the induction into the National 4-H Hall of Fame; and the successful administration of more than \$60 Million of grant assistance for livestock and catfish farmers without diverting any of the proceeds for administrative costs incurred by the department; and

WHEREAS, he has been supported in his endeavors by his children, Jason and Katie, and their mother, his wife, Sandra Dawson Spell, who passed away in 2003, and his present wife, Clara Adams Spell; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we honor this diligent state employee and elected official, whose career and leadership serves as an example to all citizens of the State of Mississippi and whose legacy of service is exemplified by initiative, fairness and good judgment:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize and commend the career of Lester James Spell, Jr., D.V.M., congratulate him upon his retirement, and extend to Commissioner Spell and his family the thanks of a grateful state for the hard work and many sacrifices to serve the people of the state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Dr. Spell and made available to the members of the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE  
March 18, 2011

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
March 23, 2011

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES