

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1804

By McNally

A RESOLUTION to commend Mike Bell for his honorable service to the people of Tennessee, despite being a member of the Senate.

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that the members of this General Assembly should honor a colleague who is departing these august chambers in search of greener pastures, cleaner air, and the more traditional wildlife of McMinn County; and

WHEREAS, Mike Bell of Riceville has announced his imminent departure from the Senate after twelve years of nothing much at all; and

WHEREAS, prior to being elected to public office, Mike Bell was a super citizen lobbyist for the home school association; in this capacity, he learned something about the less salubrious aspects of the General Assembly but decided to run for the House of Representatives anyway; and

WHEREAS, after enduring four years in the House of Dysfunction, Mike Bell was elected to the Senate in 2010; since that fateful day, his hair has disappeared, just as his nerves have frayed and his faith in the legislative process has diminished; and

WHEREAS, appointed Chair of the Senate Government Operations Committee (GOC) in 2012, he earned renown as the "Guru of Gov Ops" for his mastery of the world of rule review, comptroller audits, sunset bills, and numerous other arcane matters that absolutely no one else understands or cares about; and

WHEREAS, an avid hunter and outdoorsman, Senator Bell often supplies his colleagues with homemade delicacies made from various wildlife that were unfortunate enough to enter his gun sights or veer into the path of his truck, and as co-chair of the Legislative Sportsmen's

Caucus, he provided the "mystery meat" for its annual fundraiser, mostly rabbit but sometimes human; and

WHEREAS, he also often brought venison or bear sausage snacks to bill review and leadership meetings, where he then proceeded to help make a completely different kind of sausage; and

WHEREAS, from catfish noodling to bear hunting, from racoons to reptiles, from squirrels to Sasquatch, no legislator can claim a sporting résumé to match Chairman Bell's; in fact, animals fear him so much that on one occasion, a snake killed itself by banging his head against a shovel just to avoid the wrath of this modern-day Davy Crockett; and

WHEREAS, despite continually battling Senator Watson for the championship belt of chair of the wrestling caucus, Mike Bell has never challenged The Baylor School graduate to a loser leave town match, and he even shares accommodations in Nashville with Senator Watson and Lieutenant Governor McNally, who retires for the night at 6 p.m. with a cup of cocoa; and

WHEREAS, both as the chair of GOC and the Senate Judiciary Committee, Mike Bell has earned the undying admiration of his staff by arriving at the office early after having arisen at 3:00 a.m. and downing multiple cups of coffee; high on caffeine and life, he then proceeds to share his plans for world domination; and

WHEREAS, in a rare case of legislative fortitude, Senator Bell once penned a flag letter opposing an administration bill to a certain governor, returning the favor for that governor having sent flag letters to members on legislation he opposed; that certain governor got the message; and

WHEREAS, early in his legislative career, Mike Bell was staying at a low-rent motel in Nashville when a couple illegally entered his van late one night, not to engage in amorous activities but to "toke up" as the kids say; he noticed a peculiar smell in the vehicle after the

incident but, like Bill Clinton, did not recognize it as cannabis until cooler heads gave him the 411; and

WHEREAS, although a rugged outdoorsman and hunter, Mike Bell finally met his match at the hands of his own feet; and

WHEREAS, while engaged in the pressure washing business, he often hung off the sides of houses like Spiderman, or maybe Spiderman's country cousin; for many years, he had safely maneuvered tall houses, tangled hoses, slippery driveways, steep roofs, and shaky ladders, until one day he tripped over his own feet while walking away from a finished project, falling and breaking his wrist on the last day on that job; and

WHEREAS, on a more serious note, Senator Bell is a thoughtful and productive legislator who is admired for his forthrightness; fellow legislators, lobbyists, and members of the public may not always agree with Mike Bell, but they always know where he stands; and

WHEREAS, often wearing his heart on his sleeve and tackling subjects other legislators shy away from, Senator Bell has earned the respect of supporters and adversaries alike for his careful consideration of the issues and his willingness to divert from conventional wisdom to prevent or solve problems; and

WHEREAS, a family man, businessman, and civic leader, he has proven that citizens can make a difference through being involved in public service and leading by example; and

WHEREAS, Mike Bell has benefited greatly from the expertise and dedication of several legislative staff members during his legislative career; his first assistant in the House was Mary Ellen Tate, who was followed by the inimitable Chase Johnson; Chase trailed the Boss to the upper chamber, serving first as his assistant, then as the Senate GOC research analyst, and finally as the Senate Judiciary Committee research analyst; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Haire was Senator Bell's invaluable Senate GOC research analyst for five years; Matthew Cook took over as his research analyst when Lt. Gov. McNally

stole Chase away, and Kati Coats currently serves as the research analyst for the Senate Judiciary Committee; his present assistant, Sue Lusk, has now endured six legislative sessions of trying to keep the good Senator focused and organized; and

WHEREAS, his many personal and professional accomplishments aside, Senator Mike Bell remains most grateful for the love and companionship he shares with his wife, Lisa; their children, Nathan, Laura, Zack, Rachael, and Michaela; and their six grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, for sixteen years, Senator Mike Bell has epitomized the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the Volunteer State, and his departure from the General Assembly creates a void that will not be filled until the next election; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor Senator Mike Bell for his honorable service to the people of Tennessee as a member of the Senate, commend him for his countless contributions and many good works in service of his constituents in the 9th Senate District, and extend to him our best wishes for much continued success as he leaves his accommodations with the cool kids to Jim Tracy and returns to the real world of hunting, fishing, and indifference to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.