

1 HJR9
2 126426-1
3 By Representatives Bridges and Laird
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 01-MAR-11

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8 MOURNING THE DEATH OF FORMER STATE SENATOR JOHN WILL
9 JOHNSON, JR.

10
11 WHEREAS, with profound sorrow and regret, we receive
12 news of the death of former State Senator John Will "Bubber"
13 Johnson, Jr., on February 24, 2011, at the age of 90 years;
14 and

15 WHEREAS, born July 19, 1920, he was the son of John
16 W. Johnson, Sr., and Cordelia Harrell Johnson; he attended
17 Langdale School and Marion Military Institute, where he
18 excelled in the classroom and on the gridiron; and

19 WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson graduated from The University
20 of Alabama in 1942 and The University of Alabama School of Law
21 in 1947; during his university years, he served in the Student
22 Government Association and joined the ROTC; in addition, he
23 was the only person to serve two different terms as president
24 of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity; and

25 WHEREAS, when World War II broke out, he left law
26 school and joined the United States Army, serving with
27 distinction in both the European and Pacific Theaters; his

1 duties ranged from platoon leader to defense attorney,
2 prosecutor, and commandant of a prison camp; and

3 WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson returned to law school in 1946
4 and after graduating became the first lawyer to open his
5 office in Lanett, Alabama; from 1947 until retirement in 1990,
6 he tried landmark cases expanding the rights of property
7 owners in condemnation cases and set records for the largest
8 jury verdicts in Chambers County; and

9 WHEREAS, elected to the State Senate in 1950, he
10 sponsored a variety of legislative acts including requiring
11 increased funding for African-American children attending
12 Alabama schools; Mr. Johnson is also credited with the
13 creation of Chambers County Lake, among other achievements; he
14 was deeply committed to the cause of public education and in
15 both the 1951 and 1953 sessions introduced legislation to
16 provide funding for schools in Chambers County; and

17 WHEREAS, in 1954, he founded First Federal Savings
18 and Loan Association, now CharterBank, with the vision of
19 encouraging home ownership, and he was instrumental in
20 establishing The Charter Foundation in 1994, a private
21 foundation that provides grants in the area; in 1963, he
22 founded Citizens National Bank; and

23 WHEREAS, among his many roles of community
24 leadership, he played a key role in establishing the George H.
25 Lanier Memorial Hospital, the first hospital in the nation
26 funded under the Hill-Burton Act, and the Chambers County
27 Bradshaw Library, serving as a longtime member on both boards

1 as well as being instrumental in the passage of constitutional
2 amendments to fund libraries and public hospitals in Chambers
3 County; and

4 WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was also one of the organizers
5 and served as attorney for the City of Valley; East Alabama
6 Water, Sewer, and Fire Protection District; Lee-Chambers Water
7 District; and Home Federal and Loan Association; and

8 WHEREAS, a scholarship at The University of Alabama
9 bears his name; he was an avid supporter of The University of
10 Alabama, Auburn University, the University of Georgia,
11 LaGrange College, and Stetson University; he was also a
12 lifelong member and supporter of the Langdale United Methodist
13 Church; and

14 WHEREAS, he is survived by his devoted wife of more
15 than 60 years, Elsie B. Johnson; three sons, John W. Johnson,
16 III, Robert L. Johnson, and Curt M. Johnson; two
17 daughters-in-law, Tracey Johnson and Lydia Johnson;
18 grandchildren, Andrew Johnson, Franklin Johnson, Helen
19 Johnson, Andrew Coody, Skye Coody, Chauncey Johnson, John Will
20 Johnson, Kit Johnson, and Evan Johnson; sister, Marie
21 Cunningham; brother-in-law, Fletcher Sheriff; sisters-in-law,
22 Leila Sheriff and Betty Johnson; five nieces, Cordelia
23 Patterson, Patsy Porter, Susan Ennis, Cathy Goshen, and Denise
24 Porter; and one nephew, Chan Brinson; and

25 WHEREAS, Mr. Johnson was a loving husband, father,
26 and grandfather who remained committed throughout his life to
27 God, country, family, and community; now therefore,

1 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
2 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the death of former State
3 Senator John Will Johnson, Jr., is recorded with deep sadness,
4 and this resolution is offered in highest tribute to his life,
5 along with heartfelt sympathy to his grieving family.