

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 641

By Williams R

A RESOLUTION designating "Home To Stay" by the late Jasper N. Bailey as Tennessee's state veterans poem.

WHEREAS, from time to time, this General Assembly has adopted state symbols, songs, poems, and slogans that extol the beauty and virtues of Tennessee; however, this body has yet to specifically dedicate a poem to those brave men and women from Tennessee who proudly served their country in the United States armed forces; and

WHEREAS, we wish to rectify this oversight by designating "Home To Stay" by the late Jasper N. Bailey as Tennessee's state veterans poem; and

WHEREAS, a resident of Cookeville, the late Jasper Newton Bailey, Jr. was a highly decorated veteran of World War II; and

WHEREAS, Sergeant Bailey valiantly served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 15th Air Force, from 1943-1945, and flew 50 bombing missions over Europe as a radio gunner on a B-17 crew; and

WHEREAS, he then volunteered for 25 additional missions in the China-Burma-India theater; on June 6, 1945, he was declared missing in action for two weeks after bailing out of his B-24 aircraft; and

WHEREAS, for his great heroism in combat, Jasper Bailey was awarded the Air Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, three Bronze Stars, one Silver Star, and various campaign medals and commendations; and

WHEREAS, after he returned home from the war, Mr. Bailey served his fellow veterans as a member of Post 46 of the American Legion for more than 60 years; and

WHEREAS, in “Home To Stay,” Mr. Bailey speaks from experience as he assumes the voice of a homesick soldier who is serving overseas, but longs for the beauty and tranquility of his home state of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, after the soldier returns home, he reflects upon God’s grace and concludes that God kept him alive during the war “to celebrate this day,” i.e. his return to Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in the final verse of the poem, the soldier accepts his mortality and expresses his hope that Heaven will closely resemble “sunny Tennessee”; and

WHEREAS, in this simple, yet moving, poem, Mr. Bailey depicts with great accuracy the loneliness and alienation experienced by American soldiers serving overseas during wartime and their universal desire to safely return home to their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, “Home To Stay” is a fitting tribute to those Tennesseans who bravely served America in times of war and a perfect expression of the love that all native sons and daughters feel for the Volunteer State and their longing to return home; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that “Home To Stay” by the late Jasper N. Bailey is hereby designated Tennessee’s state veterans poem, to wit:

“Home To Stay” by Jasper N. Bailey

O Tennessee, my Tennessee, the fairest land of all.
Throughout the years, I’ve journeyed far
but ever heard your call,

To come back to the place I love
and never more to roam,
and settle in that promised land,
the state I call my home,

So now I’m back and here to stay
with no more wars to fight.
These peaceful hills will usher in
a season of delight.

For God has blessed me, this I know
but why I cannot say.
Unless His grace has kept me safe
to celebrate this day.

And He will call me sometime soon
to place me where I'll be.
I hope it's like the fair, fair, land
in sunny Tennessee.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to
the Secretary of State.