

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 932

By Maggart

A RESOLUTION recognizing Richard Sterban.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this body recognizes those who, throughout their years of industry, have performed their duties with dignity and ability and who, as performers, have brought inspiration and enjoyment to so many people; and

WHEREAS, Richard Sterban is one such individual, a talented singer who, after touring with Elvis Presley, served as a long-standing member of The Oak Ridge Boys; and

WHEREAS, a native of Camden, New Jersey, Mr. Sterban began singing as a boy in church. He developed a passion for southern gospel music, and began singing in gospel groups as a teenager; and

WHEREAS, while still in college, Richard Sterban formed his own singing group and served as that group's business manager. After singing with several groups in the Northeast, he moved to Nashville in 1970 and joined the renowned gospel group JD Sumner and The Stamps Quartet; and

WHEREAS, it was in 1971 that Mr. Sterban joined the King, Elvis Presley, singing back-up vocals on tour. Over the next year, he performed in 167 shows with Elvis, entertaining more than 900,000 people; and

WHEREAS, he also appeared in *Elvis on Tour*, a documentary which won a Golden Globe Award in 1972, and lent his vocal stylings towards Elvis's studio efforts, contributing to several of the King's albums; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, against the advice of a number of friends and associates, Richard Sterban joined the long-standing but relatively-unknown gospel group, The Oak Ridge Boys; and

WHEREAS, The Oak Ridge Boys became part of the first country music tour to go behind the Iron Curtain when, in 1976, they toured the Soviet Union with Roy Clark; and

WHEREAS, the gospel quartet struggled to find success until 1977, when they reinvented themselves as a country group and released *Y'all Come Back Saloon*, an album which saw immediate commercial success; and

WHEREAS, between 1977 and 1980, The Oak Ridge Boys had ten songs reach the top of the country music charts, performed with Kenny Rogers in the first-ever arena tour featuring country music acts, and reached superstar status with the release of the crossover hit, "Elvira."; and

WHEREAS, it was Richard Sterban's dulcet bass crooning of the iconic line "Oom Poppa Mau Mau" which helped make the song so popular around the world; and

WHEREAS, throughout their career, The Oak Ridge Boys have sold more than thirty million albums, have performed all over the world, have performed for numerous foreign leaders and for five Presidents of the United States, and have won five Grammy Awards, four ACMs, four CMAs, and nine Dove Awards. The group was invited to join the Grand Ole Opry, one of country music's highest honors, in 2011; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Sterban has long been active in a number of civic and community organizations, including the Boy Scouts of America, Stop Child Abuse Now, The National Anthem Project, and Save Our Children, and he rendered sterling service as a member of the boards of directors of the Country Music Association and the Elvis Presley Foundation; and

WHEREAS, he has also been active in the political realm, working for candidates on the local, state, and national levels and, for several years, has been the voice of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association weather radio network; and

WHEREAS, Richard Sterban has been a staunch supporter of Vanderbilt athletics for a number of years and, between 1978 and 2008, he was a minority owner of the Nashville Sounds minor league baseball team; and

WHEREAS, his amazing life story will be told in his upcoming autobiography: *From Elvis to Elvira, My Life On Stage*; and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Richard Sterban has shared his wondrous vocal talents through song, entertaining millions around the world, and it is wholly fitting that he be formally recognized by this body for his many contributions to this State and to the spheres of country and gospel music; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby recognize Richard Sterban, applauding his long-lasting musical career and his many contributions to those in need.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend out best wishes for Mr. Sterban's every future success and happiness.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.