

1 State of Arkansas
2 88th General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2011

SMR 3

4
5 By: Senator Laverty

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7 **SENATE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION**

8 IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF MR. JON FITCH AND IN
9 RECOGNITION OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE STATE OF
10 ARKANSAS AND HIS LOCAL COMMUNITY.

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13 **Subtitle**

14 IN RESPECTFUL MEMORY OF MR. JON FITCH AND
15 IN RECOGNITION OF HIS CONTRIBUTIONS TO
16 THE STATE OF ARKANSAS AND HIS LOCAL
17 COMMUNITY.

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20 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
21 STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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23 WHEREAS, Mr. Jon Fitch of Little Rock, Arkansas, died on Saturday,
24 February 26, 2011, at the age of sixty (60) years; and

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26 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch was born June 8, 1950; was a graduate of the public
27 schools of Springdale, Arkansas; and completed his higher education at the
28 University of Arkansas; and

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30 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch was the Director of the Arkansas Livestock and
31 Poultry Commission, having been appointed by Governor Beebe on January 22,
32 2007; and Governor Mike Beebe served with Mr. Fitch in the Senate and said
33 Mr. Fitch was a dear friend and a dependable ally; and

34
35 WHEREAS, "I met Jon when I entered the Senate in 1983, and we remained
36 close colleagues for the next 28 years," Beebe said in a statement. "A dear



1 friend and a dependable ally, Jon jumped at the chance to lead the Livestock
2 and Poultry Commission, and his time there has bolstered both the efficiency
3 and morale of the office. We will miss his warm smile and his dedication to
4 Arkansas, and I will personally miss his friendship."; and

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6 WHEREAS, the General Assembly established the Livestock & Poultry
7 Commission in 1963; and the first man to be appointed to lead that department
8 was Rolla Fitch, Jon Fitch's father; and

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10 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch, then of Hindsville, Arkansas, served in the House
11 of Representatives from 1979 until 1985, and then he was elected to the
12 Senate where he served until 2002, when he left the General Assembly to run a
13 cattle ranch that was a sixth generation family farm and cattle operation in
14 Madison County near Hindsville, Arkansas; and

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16 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch was one of the inner circle of leadership in the
17 Senate during the 1990s that confronted the old regime and spread power among
18 a great number of senators; and that circle, known as "the golfers" changed
19 the way the Senate chose committee chairmanships, wresting power from a
20 handful of senior senators who had controlled the Senate's rules, the
21 calendar, and the leadership of its committees; and

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23 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch served and chaired numerous committees while in the
24 legislature, including eighteen (18) years as a member of the Agriculture and
25 Economic Development Committee and handled numerous bills concerning
26 livestock and poultry, bringing valuable expertise from his background as a
27 successful farmer, cattleman, and businessman; in 1985, when Arkansas's
28 cattle industry was on the verge of being placed on brucellosis quarantine,
29 he passed the first Brucellosis Eradication Act; and Arkansas reached
30 Brucellosis-free status in 1997; and

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32 WHEREAS, during his tenure in the General Assembly, his legislative
33 duties steadily increased as he became one of the most experienced and
34 knowledgeable members of the body; Mr. Fitch served as chair of the Public
35 Transportation Committee, the Insurance and Commerce Committee, and the
36 Legislative Joint Auditing Committee; he served as vice chair of the Joint

1 Committee on Public Retirement and Social Security Systems; he served on the
2 Joint Committee on Children and Youth and on the Joint Budget Committee,
3 where he became an expert on the state budget and one of the legislature's
4 strongest advocates of vocational and technical education, higher education,
5 and the public schools; and in 2002, he served as national chair of the
6 Energy Council, an international organization of energy-producing regions in
7 the United States, Canada, and Venezuela; and

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9 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch's strength was in handling legislation; and in 1997
10 alone, he sponsored or co-sponsored thirty (30) bills that became law; and

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12 WHEREAS, Mr. Fitch still always managed to find time to represent his
13 constituents when they called him needing help on government issues; and it
14 was at times a challenge, since his Senate district extended over eight (8)
15 counties and was the largest in the state geographically,

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17 NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH GENERAL
18 ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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20 THAT the Senate recognizes Jon Fitch's commitment, hard work,
21 dedication, and years of service to the State of Arkansas and his local
22 community, and commends him for his leadership.

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24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the individual members of the Senate hereby
25 express sincere condolences to the family of Mr. Fitch, and upon adoption of
26 this resolution, an appropriate copy shall be provided to the family of Mr.
27 Fitch by the Secretary of the Senate.

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