

# SJR7 INTRODUCED



1 SJR7  
2 J5M6FYY-1  
3 By Senator Waggoner  
4 RFD:  
5 First Read: 05-Feb-25



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SJR\_\_\_ MOURNING THE DEATH AND CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF UNITED STATES ARMY VETERAN, FORMER STATE LEGISLATOR, AND FORMER AMBASSADOR, WILLIAM JELKS CABANISS, JR.

WHEREAS, it is with profound sorrow that we note the death of William Jelks "Bill" Cabaniss, Jr. of Birmingham, Alabama, on February 2, 2025, at the age of 86; and

WHEREAS, his departure leaves a void in the lives of his loving family, many friends, and the community where he was highly regarded; and

WHEREAS, Bill Cabaniss was born in 1938 in Birmingham to William Jelks Cabaniss, Sr. and Florence Pierson Sanson Cabaniss; he graduated from the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey in 1956 and matriculated to Vanderbilt University, graduating in 1960; he trained in Vanderbilt's ROTC program and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army; he served as an Airborne Ranger for three years of active duty in Germany; and in 1964, he was awarded the Army Commendation Medal; and

WHEREAS, in 1962, Bill Cabaniss married his wife of 58 years, Catherine Hood Caldwell; they shared an extraordinary life together, beginning in Zweibrucken, Germany; after Bill's honorable discharge from active duty, the couple moved to Birmingham to start their family; he acquired a small metal grinding company that he successfully



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29 built into Precision Grinding, Inc.; and

30 WHEREAS, concerned about Alabama's relationship to  
31 business, Bill Cabaniss ran for and won a seat in the  
32 Alabama House of Representatives in 1978; in 1982, he was  
33 elected to the Alabama State Senate and served eight years;  
34 he supported many bipartisan bills that most benefited the  
35 citizens of Alabama; his peers voted him one of five  
36 outstanding state senators; and

37 WHEREAS, State Senator Cabaniss attempted a run for  
38 the U.S. Senate and, although he was unsuccessful, he gained  
39 the friendship of President George W. Bush who appointed him  
40 Ambassador to the Czech Republic; he served that post with  
41 distinction from 2004 to 2006, further cementing ties  
42 between the two democracies; he traveled and lectured  
43 throughout Europe on behalf of the United States and the  
44 Czech Republic; he maintained a friendship with President  
45 Vaclav Klaus and upon returning home, he became involved in  
46 several not-for-profit organizations in Prague and New York;  
47 and

48 WHEREAS, he was active in his Birmingham community  
49 and served on the boards of directors for several notable  
50 firms; he chaired the Metropolitan Development Board and the  
51 Board of Junior Achievement of Jefferson County; he was  
52 inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor in 2004 and the  
53 Alabama Business Hall of Fame in 2006; he served faithfully  
54 as Senior Warden at Saint Luke's Episcopal Church for many  
55 years; and

56 WHEREAS, he was predeceased by his wife; son, William



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57 Jelks Cabaniss III; and sister, Joan Cabaniss Harrison; he  
58 will be lovingly remembered by his loving fiance, Linda  
59 Parker Johnson; daughters, Mary Cabaniss Ballard and Frances  
60 Cabaniss Johnson (Kenny); sister, Florence Cabaniss Parnegg;  
61 his beloved grandchildren, Mary Steele Johnson, Bill  
62 Johnson, Kenny Johnson, and twins, Frances Jean and Maria  
63 Nancy Ballard; and a host of nieces, nephews, extended  
64 family, and many friends and former colleagues; and

65 WHEREAS, although his presence will be greatly  
66 missed, the memory of Bill Cabaniss will be cherished in the  
67 hearts of all who knew and loved him; now therefore,

68 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH  
69 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the death of William Jelks  
70 Cabaniss, Jr. is recorded with deep sadness, and this  
71 resolution is offered to his family in tribute to his life  
72 and with heartfelt sympathy to his loved ones whose grief is  
73 shared by many.