

HJR85 INTRODUCED



1 HJR85
2 XDPS2ZE-1
3 By Representatives Ross, Colvin, Lovvorn
4 RFD: Rules
5 First Read: 03-Feb-26



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4 HJR ____ HONORING THE LIFE, SERVICE, AND LEGACY OF DR. NEIL E.
5 CHRISTOPHER.

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7 WHEREAS, it is with profound sorrow and deep regret
8 that we record the passing of Dr. Neil E. Christopher of
9 Guntersville, Alabama, on January 22, 2026, at the age of
10 92; and

11 WHEREAS, a self-described country doctor, Dr.
12 Christopher was a foundational pillar of family medicine, a
13 leader in promoting and improving rural health care, and a
14 true example of humanitarianism; and

15 WHEREAS, Neil E. Christopher was born on December 14,
16 1933, in Crossville, Alabama; after graduating as
17 valedictorian of his class, he attended Alabama Polytechnic
18 University, now Auburn University, first pursuing a degree
19 in agriculture; Neil was inspired by his brother to switch
20 majors and pursue a career in medicine; and

21 WHEREAS, he completed his studies at Auburn and
22 progressed to earn his medical degree from the University of
23 Alabama at Birmingham; after medical school and residency,
24 he chose to pursue general practice; when the specialty of
25 family medicine was created, Neil became a founding member
of the American Academy of Family Physicians; and

27 WHEREAS, in 1967, Dr. Christopher entered the United
28 States Navy, serving two years in active duty in Vietnam;

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29 Dr. Christopher served as the Commanding Officer in the
30 American Military Public Health Assistance Program, tasked
31 with training Vietnamese physicians and nurses while also
32 providing patient care; he was honorably discharged in June
33 1969 and was awarded the Bronze Star for meritorious
34 service; and

35 WHEREAS, following his two years in the Armed
36 Services, Dr. Christopher became the leading voice for the
37 urgent need for quality rural health care in Alabama and,
38 with the American Academy of Family Physicians, served as
39 Chair of its Rural Healthcare Committee; he spearheaded the
40 formation of the Alabama Family Practice Rural Health Board
41 and served as its inaugural Chair; and

42 WHEREAS, his servant leadership, wise counsel, and
43 professionalism were noted by many organizations and led to
44 his service on the Medical Licensure Commission of the State
45 of Alabama, the Auburn University Trustee Selection
46 Committee, and many other boards; and

47 WHEREAS, his efforts were widely recognized through
48 many honors, including Family Doctor of the Year by the
49 Alabama Academy of Family Physicians; the Samuel Buford Word
50 Award, the highest honor given for humanitarian service by
51 the Medical Association of the State of Alabama; induction
52 into the Alabama Healthcare Hall of Fame; the Auburn
53 University Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award; and the
54 establishment of The Neil E. Christopher, M.D., Endowed
55 Chair in Family and Community Medicine at UAB; and

56 WHEREAS, outside of medicine, Dr. Christopher

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57 cherished time with his family, cheering on the Auburn
58 Tigers, and boating; he was a man of deep faith and a
59 dedicated member of First Baptist Church of Guntersville;
60 above all else, he loved his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ;
61 his family; and his fellow man; and

62 WHEREAS, left to cherish his memory and live out his
63 legacy are his loving wife, Carolyn; sons, Neil Christopher,
64 Jr., MD (Susan) and Reid Christopher, MD (Lisa);
65 grandchildren, Wade Christopher, MD (Laura), Ryan
66 Christopher, Will Bridges (Brittany), Caroline Bridges
67 Johnson (JH), Elizabeth Bridges, Sarah Christopher, and
68 Aimee Christopher; and five great-grandchildren; now
69 therefore,

70 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
71 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That the death of Dr. Neil E.
72 Christopher is recorded with deep sadness, and we honor his
73 life and legacy with profound gratitude for his
74 extraordinary contributions to medicine, education, rural
75 health care, and the people of Alabama; this resolution is
76 an expression of the high regard in which he is held by his
77 community and as a lasting testament to a life well lived in
78 service to others.