

SJR64 INTRODUCED



1 SJR64

2 3P1FREV-1

3 By Senators Stewart, Albritton, Allen, Barfoot, Beasley, Bell,

4 Butler, Carnley, Chambliss, Chesteen, Coleman,

5 Coleman-Madison, Elliott, Figures, Givhan, Gudger, Hatcher,

6 Hovey, Jones, Kelley, Kitchens, Livingston, Melson, Orr,

7 Price, Roberts, Sessions, Shelnut, Singleton, Smitherman,

8 Stutts, Waggoner, Weaver, Williams, Woods

9 RFD:

10 First Read: 26-Feb-26



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SJR___ CELEBRATING THE LIFE AND MOURNING THE DEATH OF JO ANN BLACKMON BLAND.

WHEREAS, with an overwhelming sense of loss, we mourn the death, yet celebrate the life, of Mrs. Jo Ann Blackmon Bland of Selma, Alabama, whose passing on February 19, 2026, has left a void in the lives of her family and friends; and

WHEREAS, born on July 29, 1953, to Alfred Charles Blackmon and Ludie Wright Blackmon, and lovingly raised by her grandmother Sylvia Johnson, Mrs. Bland's early life was shaped by faith, discipline, and resilience in the face of segregation and injustice; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Bland became involved in the Civil Rights Movement as a child, attending meetings of the Dallas County Voters League with her grandmother and later joining the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, demonstrating extraordinary courage and conviction at a young age; and

WHEREAS, by the age of 11 she had endured numerous arrests for her participation in nonviolent demonstrations, reflecting a remarkable commitment to justice and equality rarely seen in one so young; and

WHEREAS, in 1965 she marched across the Edmund Pettus Bridge on Bloody Sunday alongside hundreds of peaceful demonstrators, an event that helped awaken the conscience of the nation and contributed to the passage of the Voting



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29 Rights Act of 1965; and

30 WHEREAS, Mrs. Bland was among the first students to
31 integrate A.G. Parrish High School in Selma, further
32 advancing the cause of equal access to education in her
33 community; and

34 WHEREAS, she later earned a degree from the College
35 of Staten Island and honorably served in the United States
36 Army, continuing her life of public service; and

37 WHEREAS, upon returning home to Selma, she co-founded
38 the National Voting Rights Museum and Institute and later
39 established Journeys for the Soul, through which she
40 educated visitors from around the world on the true history
41 and legacy of the Civil Rights Movement; and

42 WHEREAS, Mrs. Bland remained committed to preserving
43 the memory of the movement's everyday participants, working
44 to develop Foot Soldiers Park as a tribute to those whose
45 courage shaped American democracy; and

46 WHEREAS, throughout her life she reminded others that
47 the struggle for civil rights is not solely the story of one
48 people, but the shared history of the nation, and she
49 dedicated herself to ensuring that future generations would
50 understand both the sacrifices made and the progress
51 achieved; and

52 WHEREAS, beyond her public contributions, she was a
53 devoted mother, grandmother, mentor, and matriarch who
54 instilled in her family and community the values of faith,
55 discipline, integrity, and service; and

56 WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her parents;



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57 grandmother, Sylvia Johnson; sisters, Jackie Maxey and Lynda
58 Lowery; and brother, Al Blackmon; and

59 WHEREAS, left to cherish her memory are her son,
60 Antonio Bowie, Sr.; granddaughter, Jasmyn Bowie; grandsons,
61 Antonio Bowie, Jr., Samuel Bowie, and Jordan Bowie; sisters,
62 Sadie Moss, Mary Myles, and Mary Hudson; and a host of
63 nieces, nephews, cousins, extended family members, and
64 lifelong friends; and

65 WHEREAS, Mrs. Bland's life stands as a testament to
66 courage rooted in faith, and her legacy will continue
67 through those she taught, inspired, and guided; she will be
68 sorrowfully missed, but the memory of her good deeds
69 remains, and she will be forever treasured in the hearts of
70 those whose lives she shared; now therefore,

71 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA, BOTH
72 HOUSES THEREOF CONCURRING, That while mourning the death of
73 Mrs. Jo Ann Blackmon Bland, it is comforting to remember her
74 extraordinary life of courage, service, and devotion to the
75 principles of justice and equality, and this resolution is
76 offered to her grieving family with heartfelt sympathy.

77 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That "I, Senator Robert
78 Stewart, Jr., am deeply saddened to learn of the passing of
79 Jo Ann Bland: civil rights activist, economic development
80 champion, and visionary leader. I knew her as Momma Bland.
81 As a boy, I sat at her feet at the National Voting Rights
82 Museum while she served as curator, listening to stories
83 that shaped my understanding of courage and sacrifice.



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84 Little did I know that years later she would become
85 my boss at Foot Soldiers Park. She lead downtown Selma
86 revitalization. Life has a way of bringing things full
87 circle.

88 She poured into generations with truth, strength, and
89 unwavering love for Selma. Her legacy is woven into the soil
90 of this sacred city.

91 I am praying for our Selma family and for our
92 community at large. Grateful beyond words that we were
93 blessed to know such a beautiful soul."