A RESOLUTION adjourning the Interim Joint Committee on Banking and Insurance in honor and loving memory of Representative Billy Ray Smith.

WHEREAS, Representative Billy Ray Smith honorably served in the Kentucky House of Representatives from 1982 to 1995, representing the citizens of Warren and Simpson Counties in the 21st District; and

WHEREAS, during his legislative tenure, Representative Smith served on the Agriculture and Banking and Insurance Committees and chaired the Banking and Insurance Committee from 1990 to 1995. He earned the respect of his colleagues through his ability to work across party lines and his steadfast advocacy for agriculture and agribusiness; and

WHEREAS, following his legislative service, Representative Smith was elected Commissioner of Agriculture in 1995 and reelected in 1999, becoming the first person in the Commonwealth's history elected to two consecutive terms in that office. Drawing upon his lifelong experience in agriculture, he worked to strengthen the agricultural economy and advance opportunities for farm families and rural communities; and

WHEREAS, as Commissioner of Agriculture, Representative Smith championed the investment of tobacco settlement funds in agricultural preservation and diversification, helping lay the foundation for the Kentucky Agricultural Development Fund. He expanded international marketing opportunities for agricultural products and advanced initiatives promoting economic development, farm safety, and agricultural education, including Kentucky Proud, the Farm and Home Safety Program, Ag in the Classroom, and the Ag Tag Program; and

WHEREAS, his leadership extended beyond the Commonwealth through his service as president of both the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture and the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture; and

WHEREAS, continuing his commitment to agricultural education and the development of future generations, Representative Smith served as executive director of the Kentucky FFA Foundation from 2005 to 2013. During his tenure, philanthropic support increased significantly, culminating in the largest single gift to an FFA foundation in the nation; and

WHEREAS, William Ray Smith was born on April 5, 1944, to Leslie Eugene and Evelyn Stahl Smith and grew up as a fourth-generation farmer and cattle breeder. A 1965 graduate of Western Kentucky University with a degree in agriculture, he managed Pan American Mills, a grain elevator and livestock feed manufacturing company, for nearly 30 years; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of his contributions to agriculture and public service, Representative Smith was inducted into the Western Kentucky University Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2001 and the Warren County Public Schools Hall of Distinguished Alumni in 2013. His numerous honors also included recognition as Progressive Farmer Man of the Year and Distinguished Rural Kentuckian in 2013; and

WHEREAS, his dedication to public and community service was further reflected in his membership on the Board of Directors of the Kentucky State Fair and Exposition Center and the Board of Trustees of Campbellsville University; and

WHEREAS, a man of deep faith and devotion to his family and community, Representative Smith served for many years as a deacon and Sunday school teacher and was a longtime member of First Baptist Church of Bowling Green. In retirement, he continued his lifelong passion for farming and cattle breeding while cherishing time spent with his grandchildren and great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Representative Smith was preceded in death by his parents, his wife of 50 years, Sandra Kay Simpson Smith, and his brother, Larry Smith. He is survived by his wife, Jane

McLellan Thomas Smith; his four children, Cindy Crume, Kelly Smith, Heather Ragan, and Leslie Carter; his stepchildren, Lee Thomas, Mark Thomas, and Beth Alagna; his grandchildren, step-grandchildren, and great-grandchildren; his sister, Ellen Kay Smith Alexander; his step-mother, Wilma Smith; an aunt, Betty Stahl; an uncle, Norman Stahl; a sister-in-law, Pat White; and many cousins, nieces, and nephews; and

WHEREAS, Representative Billy Ray Smith, a distinguished former member of the Kentucky General Assembly and devoted husband, father, grandfather, friend, and public servant, departed this earthly life on October 10, 2026, at the age of 82, leaving a legacy of dedicated service to the Commonwealth and leaving all whose lives he touched in solemn mourning;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the Interim Joint Committee on Banking and Insurance of the Legislative Research Commission of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

Section 1. The members of the Interim Joint Committee on Banking and Insurance, both individually and collectively, hereby express their profound sympathy upon the passing of former Kentucky State Representative Billy Ray Smith and extend their heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and community.

Section 2. When the Interim Joint Committee on Banking and Insurance adjourns this day, November 9, 2026, it does so in honor and loving memory of Representative Billy Ray Smith.

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Senator Jared Carpenter, Co-chair Representative Michael Meredith, Co-chair