

SENATE RESOLUTION 7024 of the First Extraordinary Session

By Pody

A RESOLUTION to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of  
Cracker Barrel Old Country Store.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this legislative body should recognize and commend those exemplary restaurant enterprises that, through an abiding commitment to excellence, have contributed greatly to this State for many years; and

WHEREAS, one such outstanding institution is Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc., which is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year; and

WHEREAS, founded in Lebanon by Dan Evins in 1969, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store today boasts a total of 660 restaurants in forty-five states, all selling old-fashioned wares and offering menus filled with classic Southern cuisine; and

WHEREAS, while working in the family gasoline business in the late 1960s, Dan Evins saw an unmet need. The Interstate Highway System was expanding and connecting people to new places, but people on the move could not always count on finding a consistent, quality place to stop along the way and stretch their legs, refuel, and find a good meal at a fair price; and

WHEREAS, Dan Evins was inspired to build an "old country store" to meet their needs, a place that preserved the ingredients of country life to share with travelers on the road and families from nearby; the first restaurant was built near I-40 along Highway 109 in Lebanon and opened in September 1969, serving such Southern favorites as biscuits, grits, country ham, and turnip greens, along with a store where "you could buy someone a gift that was actually worth having"; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store proved so successful that, by 1977, Mr. Evins and his investors, most of whom were local friends and associates, had expanded Cracker Barrel to thirteen stores across Tennessee and into Georgia; and

WHEREAS, early Cracker Barrel stores also sold gasoline, but after the oil embargo of the mid-1970s, new stores were built without gas pumps. Cracker Barrel reduced its number of on-site gas stations in the early 1980s, before eventually phasing them out altogether; however, thirty-two current stores provide electric vehicle charging stations; and

WHEREAS, all of the tools, signs, photographs, and toys that decorate the walls of every Cracker Barrel are authentic vintage items—no reproductions allowed. When the first Cracker Barrel opened, founder Dan Evins asked Don and Kathleen Singleton, a couple who ran a local antiques store, to help him decorate the space in the style of an old country store; today, the couple's son, Larry Singleton, is in charge of finding unique regional artifacts for new restaurant locations and maintains an entire decor warehouse filled with over 90,000 artifacts at the company's headquarters in Lebanon; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel became a publicly traded company in 1981 and, following the initial public offering, grew at a rate of around twenty percent per year; by 1987, the company had become a chain of more than fifty stores in eight states; and

WHEREAS, the company grew consistently through the 1980s and 1990s, attaining a \$1 billion market value by 1992; in 1993, Cracker Barrel's revenue was nearly twice that of any other family restaurant; and

WHEREAS, the number of Cracker Barrel locations increased to more than 420 between 1997 and 2000, at which time the chain focused on opening new locations in residential areas; by 2011, Cracker Barrel had opened more than 600 restaurants in forty-two states; and

WHEREAS, each year, Cracker Barrel serves 11 million orders of Chicken n' Dumplings, 151 million eggs, 121 million slices of bacon, 56 million pancakes, 37 million portions of grits, 13 million pounds of chicken tenders, and more than 4 million Moon Pies; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel often partners with some of the biggest names in country music to release exclusive albums that can be purchased at its Old Country Stores and on its website. In addition to working with such performers as Alabama and Alan Jackson, the chain teamed up with the one-and-only Dolly Parton to release a two-disc album titled *An Evening with... Dolly Live* in 2012, which went on to become certified gold by the Recording Industry Association of America; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel employees have always joined together to assist their coworkers in times of crisis; what began as simple acts of kindness evolved into Cracker Barrel Cares, an employee-funded nonprofit organization formed in 2010 to help Cracker Barrel employees in times of need; the company has also formed a partnership with the Wounded Warrior Project, a charity for injured veterans; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store has won several best chain restaurant awards from *Destinations* magazine, and in 2010 and 2011, the Zagat survey named it "Best Breakfast." Cracker Barrel was selected by the Outdoor Advertising Association of America as the 2011 OBIE Hall of Fame Award recipient for its long-standing use of outdoor advertising, and the chain has also been honored as Best Family Dining by a nationwide "Choice in Chains" consumer poll in *Restaurants & Institutions* magazine for nineteen consecutive years; and

WHEREAS, Cracker Barrel Old Country Store has been a favorite dining experience for customers across the United States for fifty years, with millions of people trusting Cracker Barrel to provide a home-away-from-home experience where they can always be assured of finding a warm, comforting meal; and

WHEREAS, for its many achievements in providing quality and value to its customers and its continued commitment to this State, we are proud to salute Cracker Barrel Old Country Store on attaining this very special milestone; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED ELEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we honor and congratulate Cracker Barrel Old Country Store, Inc., on the celebration of the company's fiftieth anniversary, applaud its ongoing legacy of integrity and commitment to excellence, and wish it much continued success in its future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.