Mr. Speaker. I rise today to recognize the Mississippi Poultry Association as they celebrate their 75th Anniversary. Poultry is Mississippi’s largest agricultural commodity. To date, the poultry industry has more than a $6 billion impact on the state’s economy. With twenty processing facilities and approximately 2,000 growers, the Mississippi poultry industry employs roughly, 56,000 people both directly and indirectly.

The Mississippi Poultry Association was formed in 1937 as the Mississippi Poultry Improvement Association to help battle poultry diseases and promote the development of the industry in the State of Mississippi. The Mississippi’s poultry industry is comprised of growers, feed mills, hatcheries, processing plants, laboratories, and company headquarters.

Mississippi ranks fifth in the nation in poultry production. Mississippi companies process about 757 million birds per year (250 times the human population of the state) and 400 million table eggs per year. The industry has grown from a few family-owned feed and seed stores who sold chickens and farmers who raised chickens, mostly into an integrated global industry with about 12 percent of broiler production exported around the globe.

Mississippi poultry companies support their communities. The Mississippi Poultry Association helped initiate the Emerging Crops Loan program passed by the legislature that has made it easier for many more farmers to enter the poultry industry and has worked closely with institutions or higher learning and government agencies such as Mississippi State University, the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce, the Board of Animal Health and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, Mississippi poultry companies donate thousands of pounds of their products annually to fight hunger and to aid and develop their communities. I ask that you and our colleagues join me in recognizing the Mississippi Poultry Association in observance of their 75th Anniversary.