SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 53

A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE CAREER OF DAVID J. DENNIS, A LEADER IN THE FIELD OF STUDENT LITERACY.

WHEREAS, President and CEO of Positive Innovations, Inc., and Project Director for The Southern Initiative of the Algebra Project, Inc., Mr. David J. Dennis is a cum laude graduate of Dillard University, New Orleans, Louisiana, and received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Michigan Law School; and

WHEREAS, he was involved in the practice of law before becoming associated with the Algebra Project, a mathematics literacy program designed to increase the proportion of urban, inner city and rural students who complete algebra and higher level mathematics, enter college and later become leading contributors to the progress of their communities and society; and

WHEREAS, since joining the Algebra Project in 1991, he has drawn on the organizing experiences of the 1960's to develop and implement a regional concept to support the activities of the project in 16 southern sites located in six states - Mississippi, Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, South Carolina and North Carolina. During the 1998-1999 year, these sites included 15 school districts, 45 participating schools and 98 teachers who provided instruction to over 4,000 students. This regional model has yielded many positive results - the connectedness brought on by collaborative efforts has (1) enhanced local capacity among and between stakeholders and programs at the respective sites; (2) maximized their use of funding sources; and (3) helped to develop models of professional development, community development and
youth initiatives. These models have evolved from the philosophical premise that "there can be no school reform without community reform" (David Dennis). The common denominator which drives the efforts in the south and which is the basis for this philosophical underpinning is the children, i.e., the young people at stake. They become the driving force around which all activities are focused and provide the necessary common ground within the various communities. This model for community reform aimed at school reform continues to be proven as an effective method for creating a community of stakeholders who collaboratively create solutions to problems involving students as they attempt to navigate the many obstacles in their continuing struggle for citizenship and equality; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his work in the south, Mr. Dennis has been actively involved in the formation of the National Algebra Project and is often a guest speaker, conducting informational workshops throughout the country; he has been written about and interviewed in numerous publications, films and documentaries; and

WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the accomplishments and dedicated service in the field of literacy to students in the State of Mississippi and in the South:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby commend the career of David J. Dennis, a leader in the field of student and adult literacy, and wish him continued success as he assists the State of Mississippi in the field of education reform.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be furnished to David J. Dennis and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.