

By: Senator(s) Burton, Horhn, Little, Hyde-Smith, Williamson, Lee, Dearing, White (29th), Posey, Kirby, Walls, Mettetal, Scoper, Farris, Frazier, Nunnelee, Smith, Harden, Jackson, Jordan, Furniss, Moffatt, King, Ross

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 581

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING STATE
2 BOARD FOR COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES (SBCJC) LONGTIME EXECUTIVE
3 DIRECTOR, DR. OLON RAY, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RETIREMENT AFTER 40
4 YEARS OF DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVICE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION.

5 WHEREAS, Dr. Olon E. Ray has announced he will retire from
6 his position as Executive Director of the State Board for
7 Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC); and

8 WHEREAS, Dr. Ray has been Executive Director of the State
9 Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) since October 1,
10 1990. As Executive Director of this state agency, Olon worked
11 with a ten-member board in the coordination of the state's 15
12 public community and junior colleges and in the oversight of other
13 programs specified by statute. In executing the policies of the
14 board and the statutes of Mississippi, Olon worked with board
15 members, as well as business, industry and other government
16 leaders. Under his leadership the board has experienced growth as
17 is evidenced by increase from approximately \$334,000.00 to \$26.8
18 Million plus. The overall two-year college system has seen an
19 unprecedented growth in both numbers of students served, from
20 48,306 to 53,669, and budget from approximately \$72 Million to
21 \$187 Million; and

22 WHEREAS, after receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree in
23 1962 at the University of Mississippi, Olon began his professional
24 work in education as a history teacher at Biloxi High School. He
25 remained in Biloxi until 1964, when he left and taught at Jackson
26 Central High School for one year. Returning to Biloxi, he began
27 his administrative work as Assistant to the Superintendent. In
28 1970, he was named Assistant Superintendent of the Biloxi Public



29 School District; and in 1975, he became Superintendent of the
30 district, one of Mississippi's largest school systems. Dr. Ray
31 resigned as Superintendent of the Biloxi schools in 1988, to
32 accept the position of Special Assistant for Education in the
33 Mississippi Governor's Office, in the administration of Governor
34 Ray Mabus. In October, 1990, he resigned as Special Assistant to
35 the Governor to accept this present position; and

36 WHEREAS, while he was still Superintendent of the Biloxi
37 schools, Olon was appointed by Governor William Winter to serve as
38 Chairman of the Performance-Based School Accreditation Task Force
39 of Mississippi. The Task Force had been created by the State
40 Legislature as a part of the Education Act of 1982, and the act
41 provided that the "recommendation of the Task Force shall be
42 implemented." The Legislature was not to be disappointed, for its
43 creation broke new ground. For the first time in the history of
44 American education, school accreditation had been tied to
45 educational performance of students in certain critical areas
46 instead of being determined by the amount of supplies and
47 equipment the school owned. Schools would be held accountable for
48 how much their students learned, instead of how much the district
49 owned. The recommendations were indeed implemented, and they
50 immediately became models for states throughout the country. As
51 Special Assistant for Education to Governor Ray Mabus, Olon helped
52 to develop, prepare and pass the legislation which is known under
53 the title "Mississippi's BEST." During that time he attended, as
54 the Assistant to the Governor, President George Bush's 1989 Summit
55 on Education, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He then was a
56 participant and contributor to the National Governors Association
57 Advisory Committee on National Goals in 1989 and 1990. Subsequent
58 to the President's Summit, Olon attended and participated in many
59 national meetings of Governors and their education advisors where
60 he became recognized as an expert on education and educational
61 reform; and



62 WHEREAS, selected civil and professional awards and honors
63 are: Outstanding Educational Administrator of Mississippi by
64 Mississippi Association of Educational Secretaries, 1976;
65 Mississippi Man of the Year Award, presented by Mississippi
66 Computing Association, 1989; Leadership Award, presented by United
67 Way of Harrison County, 1971; Outstanding Young Man of Biloxi,
68 Biloxi Junior Chamber of Commerce, 1972; Boss of the Year, Biloxi
69 Chapter of American Association of Businesswomen, 1982; Chairman,
70 Biloxi Bicentennial Commission, 1976; President, Harrison County
71 United Way, 1983; District Governor, Lions International;
72 Appointed by Governor Cliff Finch as a member of the State of
73 Mississippi Parole Board, 1977; Mississippi Community Education
74 Award, presented by the University of Southern Mississippi, 1982;
75 Chairman, Education Committee, Mississippi Economic Council, 1982;
76 Ed Ransdell Media Award, presented by the Mississippi Library
77 Association, 1984; Outstanding Alumni for Louisiana, Mississippi
78 District, January 1996; Phi Theta Kappa Board for Directors Alumni
79 Award, April 1995; and MAACE Friend of Education Award, June 1995;
80 and

81 WHEREAS, Dr. Ray is a native Mississippian, and product of
82 the public school system; he is a graduate of Weir High School; he
83 attended Northwest Mississippi Community College and holds degrees
84 from the University of Mississippi and the University of Southern
85 Mississippi; he is married to the former Ann Traylor, of Sumrall,
86 Mississippi; and

87 WHEREAS, we are grateful for Dr. Ray's legacy of service and
88 longtime oversight in the field of public education and in state
89 government:

90 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
91 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
92 we do hereby commend and congratulate State Board for Community
93 and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) longtime Executive Director, Dr. Olon
94 Ray, on the occasion of his retirement after 40 years of dedicated



95 public service, and wish him and his wife, Ann, the best as he
96 returns to private life.

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be
98 presented to Dr. Ray and his family, and be forwarded to the State
99 Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and be made available to
100 the Capitol Press Corps.

