To: Rules

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2002

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

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 581

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

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

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

WHEREAS, after receiving his Bachelor of Science Degree in 1962 at the University of Mississippi, Olon began his professional work in education as a history teacher at Biloxi High School. He remained in Biloxi until 1964, when he left and taught at Jackson Central High School for one year. Returning to Biloxi, he began his administrative work as Assistant to the Superintendent. In 1970, he was named Assistant Superintendent of the Biloxi Public
School District; and in 1975, he became Superintendent of the
district, one of Mississippi's largest school systems. Dr. Ray
resigned as Superintendent of the Biloxi schools in 1988, to
accept the position of Special Assistant for Education in the
Mississippi Governor's Office, in the administration of Governor
Ray Mabus. In October, 1990, he resigned as Special Assistant to
the Governor to accept this present position; and

WHEREAS, while he was still Superintendent of the Biloxi
schools, Olon was appointed by Governor William Winter to serve as
Chairman of the Performance-Based School Accreditation Task Force
of Mississippi. The Task Force had been created by the State
Legislature as a part of the Education Act of 1982, and the act
provided that the "recommendation of the Task Force shall be
implemented." The Legislature was not to be disappointed, for its
creation broke new ground. For the first time in the history of
American education, school accreditation had been tied to
educational performance of students in certain critical areas
instead of being determined by the amount of supplies and
equipment the school owned. Schools would be held accountable for
how much their students learned, instead of how much the district
owned. The recommendations were indeed implemented, and they
immediately became models for states throughout the country. As
Special Assistant for Education to Governor Ray Mabus, Olon helped
to develop, prepare and pass the legislation which is known under
the title "Mississippi's BEST." During that time he attended, as
the Assistant to the Governor, President George Bush's 1989 Summit
on Education, in Charlottesville, Virginia. He then was a
participant and contributor to the National Governors Association
Advisory Committee on National Goals in 1989 and 1990. Subsequent
to the President's Summit, Olon attended and participated in many
national meetings of Governors and their education advisors where
he became recognized as an expert on education and educational
reform; and
WHEREAS, selected civil and professional awards and honors are: Outstanding Educational Administrator of Mississippi by Mississippi Association of Educational Secretaries, 1976; Mississippi Man of the Year Award, presented by Mississippi Computing Association, 1989; Leadership Award, presented by United Way of Harrison County, 1971; Outstanding Young Man of Biloxi, Biloxi Junior Chamber of Commerce, 1972; Boss of the Year, Biloxi Chapter of American Association of Businesswomen, 1982; Chairman, Biloxi Bicentennial Commission, 1976; President, Harrison County United Way, 1983; District Governor, Lions International; Appointed by Governor Cliff Finch as a member of the State of Mississippi Parole Board, 1977; Mississippi Community Education Award, presented by the University of Southern Mississippi, 1982; Chairman, Education Committee, Mississippi Economic Council, 1982; Ed Ransdell Media Award, presented by the Mississippi Library Association, 1984; Outstanding Alumni for Louisiana, Mississippi District, January 1996; Phi Theta Kappa Board for Directors Alumni Award, April 1995; and MAACE Friend of Education Award, June 1995; and

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commend and congratulate State Board for Community and Junior Colleges (SBCJC) longtime Executive Director, Dr. Olon Ray, on the occasion of his retirement after 40 years of dedicated
public service, and wish him and his wife, Ann, the best as he
returns to private life.

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