

By: Senator(s) Harden

To: Rules

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 67

1 A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY'S "LEST WE
2 FORGET" ACTIVITIES WEEK MEMORIALIZING THE TRAGIC DEATHS OF PHILLIP
3 GIBBS AND JAMES GREEN.

4 WHEREAS, Jackson State University was founded as Natchez
5 Seminary in 1877 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society.
6 The school was established in Natchez, Mississippi "for the moral,
7 religious and intellectual improvement of Christian leaders of the
8 colored people of Mississippi and the neighboring states." In
9 November 1882 the school was moved to Jackson, Mississippi; in
10 March 1899 the curriculum was expanded and the name was changed to
11 Jackson College; and

12 WHEREAS, Jackson State University has a distinguished
13 history, rich in the tradition of educating young men and women
14 for leadership, having undergone seven name changes as it grew and
15 developed; and

16 WHEREAS, in the Spring of 1970, campus communities across
17 this country were characterized by a chorus of protests and
18 demonstrations. The issues were the escalation of the war in
19 Vietnam and the United States' invasion of Cambodia; the ecology;
20 racism and repression; and the inclusion of the experiences of
21 women and minorities in the educational system. No institution of
22 higher education was left untouched by confrontations and
23 continuous calls for change; and

24 WHEREAS, at Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi,
25 there was the added issue of intimidation and harassment by
26 motorists traveling Lynch Street, a major thoroughfare that
27 divided the campus and linked West Jackson to downtown; and



28 WHEREAS, on May 14-15, 1970, Jackson State University
29 students were protesting these and other issues, as well as the
30 tragedy that occurred at Kent State University in Ohio, when
31 seventy-five city police officers and state troopers opened fire
32 on students and other citizens gathered in front of Alexander
33 Hall, a women's dormitory on the campus, killing Phillip Gibbs, a
34 21-year-old Ripley, Mississippi, pre-law major, and James Earl
35 Green, a Senior at Jim Hill High School who was taking a short cut
36 home from his after-school job; and

37 WHEREAS, following the investigation of the incident by
38 federal authorities, J.R. Lynch Street, which at the time bisected
39 the campus, was closed to through traffic. The Gibbs-Green Plaza,
40 or Plaza for short, was erected shortly thereafter and named for
41 Phillip Lafayette Gibbs and James Earl Green; and

42 WHEREAS, a popular good-weather hangout for the student body,
43 the Plaza is a large, multilevel brick and concrete patio-like
44 structure that blocks off J.R. Lynch Street and links Alexander
45 Hall to the University Green. The Plaza is the site of many
46 outdoor dances, concerts, Greek shows and other events throughout
47 the year. It is especially active during homecoming, when the
48 homecoming festival and other events are held on its various
49 levels; and

50 WHEREAS, Jackson State University will honor the memory of
51 Phillip Gibbs and James E. Green with a week of activities. On
52 April 21-28, 2002, Jackson State University will host various
53 activities to memorialize the names of Gibbs and Green. The theme
54 "Lest We Forget" will be quite appropriate. In an effort to turn
55 these tragedies to something special and meaningful, activities
56 will include a Sunday Vesper Service and two Panel Guest
57 Discussions by alumni and administrators who were witnesses to the
58 events. Additionally, a student unity summit will include various
59 Mississippi colleges and university students to discuss unity and
60 diversity. The week-long event will end with a candlelight march



61 from City Hall to the memorial site of Gibbs-Green on the Jackson
62 State University campus:

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
64 MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby recognize Jackson State
65 University's "Lest We Forget" Activities Week in memory of the
66 tragic deaths of students Phillip Gibbs and James Green, and
67 commend the university for reminding its students of their legacy
68 to the people of the State of Mississippi.

69 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be
70 presented to the President of Jackson State University, forwarded
71 to the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning
72 and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

