A RESOLUTION COMMENDING SPEAKER TIM FORD FOR HIS MANY YEARS OF OUTSTANDING AND DEDICATED SERVICE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AND WISHING HIM WELL UPON HIS RETIREMENT.

WHEREAS, Timothy Alan Ford, Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives, is completing twenty-four years of consecutive service as a member of the House from District 18, which includes Lee, Prentiss and Pontotoc Counties; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford was born on October 22, 1951, and grew up in Baldwyn, Mississippi, later earning an undergraduate and law degree from the University of Mississippi, before beginning his career as a public servant by becoming an assistant district attorney in Northeast Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, he began his service as a legislator when he became a member of the Mississippi House of Representatives in 1980, gaining his stature as a statesman by rising from freshman lawmaker to chairman of the subcommittee handling important bond measures, then to his 1984 appointment as Chairman of the House Apportionment and Elections Committee and culminating in his 1988 election by his colleagues to the Office of Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford is presently the longest serving speaker in any state house in the United States, completing his fourth consecutive four-year term as Mississippi's Speaker of the House, and he is widely considered to be one of the most influential state leaders in the country today; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure in the House, Speaker Ford has taken a leading role in virtually every meaningful economic
development, educational, transportation and agricultural program, and election reform measure that has been addressed by the Mississippi Legislature; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford's love and deeply felt respect for the Legislature as an institution has led him to fight to preserve and nurture its integrity, becoming a guardian of this democratic institution during a time in Mississippi's history when the diversity of the House membership expanded to include meaningful participation by women, African Americans and Republicans, as well as the majority group of Democrats; and

WHEREAS, demonstrating that he is one of the rare leaders who is able to lead effectively while promoting and protecting the strength of the Legislature, Speaker Ford is known to be a fair and evenhanded steward of the legislative process; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford is a peacemaker who ensures that all members participate fully in the legislative process, as shown by his appointment of members from all of the diverse factions of the House membership to key positions, thereby promoting stakeholder loyalty to the House over individual political affiliations; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford's leadership abilities have been recognized nationally, having served as Chairman of the Southern Legislative Conference of the Council of State Governments, President of the Southern Speakers Conference, Vice Chairman of the Southern Growth Policies Board; having been a 2001 lecturer on public policy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University; and he is presently concluding his service as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the State Legislative Leaders Foundation; and

WHEREAS, in 2001, Speaker Ford was the first speaker to receive the prestigious "William M. Bulger Excellence in State Legislative Leadership Award," presented annually to a leader who makes a significant contribution to the performance, the strengthening and operation of his legislative institution, with
the nomination for the national award made by lawmakers and state
government observers across the United States; and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford is widely admired for his talent in
building consensus in the Legislature, regardless of the issue at
hand, and the members of the House rely on that talent in the face
of challenging legislative deliberations; and

WHEREAS, even while he leads the House with strength, Speaker
Ford is known for his congenial nature, ability to listen
effectively and infectious sense of humor, qualities which have
enabled him to defuse volatile and controversial situations; and

WHEREAS, in addition to his career as an attorney and
statesman, Speaker Ford has been a faithful member of the
Presbyterian Church, as well as a devoted father of two sons, Ken
and Sam, who have supported their father in all of his endeavors;
and

WHEREAS, Speaker Ford has indicated that he will retire at
the expiration of his present term and the members of the House of
Representatives wish to express their sincere appreciation to Mr.
Speaker for his dedicated service to the people of the State of
Mississippi and for the personal sacrifices that he has made on
their behalf:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES, That we do hereby commend our friend, colleague
and leader, Speaker Tim Ford, for all that he has meant to the
Mississippi House of Representatives and for his unmatched
contributions to the people of the State of Mississippi, and we
want him to know that his leadership will be missed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
furnished to Speaker Tim Ford and to the members of the Capitol
Press Corps.