

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Simmons, Walls,
Frazier, Thomas, Butler, Jackson (11th),
Harden, Jackson (32nd), Jordan, Turner,
Albritton, Chamberlin, Clarke, Dawkins,
Dearing, Flowers, King, Little, Moffatt,
Morgan, Nunnelee, Ross, Tollison, White,
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To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 617

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF
2 THE LANDMARK UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DECISION IN THE CASE OF
3 *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION*.

4 WHEREAS, on May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v.*
5 *Board of Education* ruled unanimously that segregation of public
6 schools "solely on the basis of race" denied black children equal
7 educational opportunity, even though "physical facilities and
8 other 'tangible' factors may have been equal." The plaintiff's
9 case was argued by Thurgood Marshall, later to become the first
10 black Supreme Court Justice.; and

11 WHEREAS, May 17, 2004, will mark the 50th Anniversary of the
12 Court's decision to desegregate America's public schools. This
13 ruling paved the way for significant opportunities in our
14 society-especially for equal justice, fairness and education.
15 We've kicked off our own celebration to raise awareness about the
16 horizons of opportunities opened up by that decision and the
17 continuing need to make real improvements in public education
18 today that fulfill the promise of equal opportunity to a quality
19 education and great schools for every child; and

20 WHEREAS, in this landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court
21 stated: "We conclude that in the field of public education, the
22 doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate
23 educational facilities are inherently unequal"; and

24 WHEREAS, the Court looked at educational conditions of the
25 segregated African American and white students in Clarendon, South
26 Carolina, New Castle, Delaware, Prince Edward, Virginia, Topeka,
27 Kansas, and the District of Columbia. The findings were compiled

28 for lower courts before reaching the Supreme Court. These
29 conditions included: teacher qualifications; pupil-teacher ratio;
30 curricula; school buildings and facilities; transportation modes
31 and travel time to and from school and extracurricular activities;
32 and

33 WHEREAS, the Court found that the racial segregation affected
34 students' motivation and retarded education and mental
35 development. Learning is hurt by segregation, racism, stereotypes
36 or reduced student achievement expectations; and

37 WHEREAS, to commemorate this landmark decision, the Census
38 Bureau has assembled data on the educational attainment and school
39 enrollment of blacks-then and now:

40 **Enrollment:** 69% is the percentage of black children ages
41 5 and 6 who were enrolled in school in 1954. By 2002,
42 enrollment of black children of those ages was 96%. 24%
43 is the percentage of young, black adults ages 18 and 19
44 who were enrolled in school in 1954. In 2002, the
45 comparable enrollment was 58%.

46 **High School Graduates:** 15% is the percentage of blacks
47 age 25 and over in 1952 who were at least high school
48 graduates. By 2002, this rate had risen to 79%. 1.6
49 Million is the number of blacks 25 years and over with at
50 least a high school diploma in 1957. This number had
51 risen to 16.0 million by 2002.

52 **College Graduates:** 2% is the percentage of blacks age 25
53 and over in 1952 who were college graduates. By 2002, the
54 rate had risen to 17%. 252,000 is the number of blacks
55 who had at least a bachelor's degree in 1957. In 2002,
56 3.5 million blacks had at least a bachelor's degree.

57 **Students:** 4.5 Million is the number of blacks enrolled in
58 schools (nursery through college) in 1955. This number
59 had risen to 11.7 million by 2002. 155,000 is the number
60 of black college students in 1955. By 2002, this number

61 had risen to 2.3 million. 926,000 is the number of black
62 high school students in 1955. In 2002, this number was
63 2.6 million; and

64 WHEREAS, the full effect of the *Brown* decision is yet to be
65 realized. Our country is still struggling with issues concerning
66 college admission standards, workplace diversity and Americans
67 with disabilities; and

68 WHEREAS, Justice O'Connor in the *Grutter* decision espoused
69 the legacy of *Brown*: "This Court has long recognized that
70 'education is the very foundation of good citizenship.' *Brown v.*
71 *Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954). For this reason,
72 the diffusion of knowledge and opportunity through public
73 institutions of higher education must be accessible to all
74 individuals regardless of race or ethnicity. Effective
75 participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the
76 civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation,
77 indivisible is to be realized"; and

78 WHEREAS, the *Brown* decision paved the way for 50 years worth
79 of school integration and diversity as well as significant
80 fairness and justice opportunities throughout our society, and it
81 is with pride that we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this
82 landmark case to recommit our state to the promise of public
83 education for all citizens:

84 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
85 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
86 we do hereby commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the landmark
87 United States Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board*
88 *of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954), and recommit ourselves to its
89 legacy.

90 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to
91 the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Education
92 for dissemination to all public school districts in the State of
93 Mississippi, and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.