

By: Representatives Watson, Stringer, Brown To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 69

1 A RESOLUTION URGING THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE TO JOIN THE
2 MISSISSIPPI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN RAISING REVENUES FOR THE
3 STATE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2006.

4 WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature is facing a budget
5 crisis of unprecedented magnitude for fiscal year 2006, which will
6 greatly jeopardize the essential services provided by all areas of
7 state government, particularly in public education, Medicaid,
8 mental health and public safety, if no action is taken; and

9 WHEREAS, the House of Representatives recognizes that this
10 financial crisis would require severe, even Draconian, cuts in the
11 present levels of funding for state government, and the House
12 believes that the enormity of the cuts would negatively impact
13 each and every Mississippian--young and old, rich and poor, male
14 and female, Black and White, north to south--sparing no one from
15 the effects of the cuts; and

16 WHEREAS, during the 2005 Regular Session, the House has
17 adopted and passed to the Senate several measures that would have
18 mitigated the severity of those cuts by raising revenues from
19 various sources, and those measures sent by the House to the
20 Senate have all died in the Senate without favorable
21 consideration, and are as follows:

22 House Bill 410, sent to the Senate on February 2, 2005, which
23 would have increased the current taxes on cigarettes and other
24 tobacco products, to raise revenues of approximately \$120 million
25 for fiscal year 2006;

26 House Bill 1409, sent to the Senate on February 11, 2005,
27 which would have provided for new and increased fees to be charged

28 by state agencies for services rendered, to raise revenues of
29 approximately \$55.7 million for fiscal year 2006;

30 House Concurrent Resolution 85, sent to the Senate on March
31 10, 2005, which would have allowed the introduction of a new bill
32 to raise revenue through increasing taxes on cigarettes and other
33 tobacco products, to attempt once more to raise revenues for
34 fiscal year 2006 by a tobacco tax; and

35 WHEREAS, if the Senate had adopted these measures, the
36 increased revenues that would have been raised for specific needs
37 would have freed up other funds in the State General Fund that
38 could have been used to mitigate the harshness of the cuts which
39 definitely will have to occur if no significant revenues are
40 raised for the next fiscal year; and

41 WHEREAS, on March 22, 2005, philanthropist Jim Barksdale
42 offered this state a \$50,000,000.00 endowment, to be placed in
43 escrow to provide a financial incentive directly to our young
44 citizens to encourage them to graduate from high school and attend
45 college, on the condition that the Legislature fully fund the
46 Mississippi Adequate Education Program and the teacher pay raise,
47 and the House believes that it is in the best interest of our
48 constituents to accept this generous offer, which will require
49 that additional revenues be raised for public education in fiscal
50 year 2006; and

51 WHEREAS, the House is willing to continue working on any
52 reasonable measures that would provide additional revenues to fund
53 the essential services of state government, and we urge our Senate
54 colleagues to be open-minded about increasing revenues and join
55 the House in adopting such measures, including those that the
56 House has already sent to them earlier this session:

57 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
58 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we respectfully
59 request the leadership and members of the Senate to take whatever
60 actions necessary to adopt measures that will provide additional

61 revenues to fund the essential services of state government during
62 fiscal year 2006, including measures already transmitted to the
63 Senate by the House earlier this session.

64 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be
65 furnished to the Senate and to the Capitol Press Corps.