

By: Representatives Watson, Stringer, Brown To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 69
(As Adopted by the House)

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 will 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, if the Legislature fails to raise revenues at the
17 state governmental level, it is likely that our local governmental
18 entities will be required to raise property and other taxes at the
19 local level; and

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

26 House Bill 410, sent to the Senate on February 2, 2005, which
27 would have increased the current taxes on cigarettes and other

28 tobacco products, to raise revenues of approximately \$120 million
29 for fiscal year 2006;

30 House Bill 1409, sent to the Senate on February 11, 2005,
31 which would have provided for new and increased fees to be charged
32 by state agencies for services rendered, to raise revenues of
33 approximately \$55.7 million for fiscal year 2006;

34 House Concurrent Resolution 85, sent to the Senate on March
35 10, 2005, which would have allowed the introduction of a new bill
36 to raise revenue through increasing taxes on cigarettes and other
37 tobacco products, to attempt once more to raise revenues for
38 fiscal year 2006 by a tobacco tax; and

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

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

55 WHEREAS, the House is willing to continue working on any
56 reasonable measures that would provide additional revenues to fund
57 the essential services of state government and is committed to
58 reducing appropriations to all aspects of state government where
59 such reductions can be reasonably made, and we urge our Senate
60 colleagues to be open-minded about increasing revenues and join

61 the House in adopting such measures, including those that the
62 House has already sent to them earlier this session:

63 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
64 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we respectfully
65 request the leadership and members of the Senate to take whatever
66 actions necessary to adopt measures that will provide additional
67 revenues to fund the essential services of state government during
68 fiscal year 2006, including measures already transmitted to the
69 Senate by the House earlier this session.

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