

By: Senator(s) Flowers

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 518

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE DEDICATED PUBLIC
2 SERVICE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NICK WALTERS AS MISSISSIPPI'S STATE
3 DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, RURAL
4 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM.

5 WHEREAS, through hard work and dedication, Nick Walters has
6 compiled an impressive list of accomplishments during his tenure
7 as Mississippi's State Director of the United States Department of
8 Agriculture, Rural Develop Program, from March 2001 to August
9 2006:

10 • Supervised and administered the distribution of between
11 \$200 and \$250 Million per fiscal year of federal funds into rural
12 Mississippi.

13 • Supplemented the agency's Congressionally-appointed money
14 with additional federal funds of between \$70 and \$120 Million per
15 year (by working the "pool" of unused money at the USDA national
16 office).

17 • Initiated and spearheaded USDA Rural Development's efforts
18 in Mississippi to help victims of Hurricane Katrina in the
19 immediate aftermath of the hurricane, which included transporting
20 FEMA personnel into rural areas for assessments of damage and
21 debris; making thousands of vacant USDA multifamily apartment
22 units available for evacuees.

23 • Opening and manning the first four Disaster Recovery
24 Centers (DRC) and manning all subsequent DRCs.

25 • Working for USDA waivers that opened to all
26 Katrina-affected areas USDA Rural Development Programs that are
27 traditionally available only to rural areas; and

28 WHEREAS, under Nick Walters' leadership, this Katrina relief
29 effort, mostly designed to help in the 90 days after the
30 hurricane, is especially pertinent in that USDA Rural Development
31 has no mandated role in disaster relief; and

32 WHEREAS, while bringing in more agency program money, Nick
33 Walters' efforts simultaneously reduced agency overhead, or
34 administrative costs by over \$1 Million annually. He
35 substantially increased visibility of the agency by concentrating
36 on outreach, educating legislators, local elected officials, water
37 association officials and businessmen about agency programs. He
38 dramatically increased the agency's involvement in health care,
39 including financing of significant buildings and expansions of
40 hospitals, clinics and other health care facilities. This effort
41 increased the agency's outreach to education, including making
42 school districts aware of grant eligibility, and funded grants to
43 school districts as well as distance-learning programs for public
44 schools; and

45 WHEREAS, Nick Walters was the third State Director of the
46 U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Rural Development
47 (formerly known as the Farmers Home Administration). President
48 George W. Bush appointed him to this position in March of 2001.
49 He will serve until August of 2006; and

50 WHEREAS, Nick Walters, a native of Wiggins, Mississippi, is a
51 seventh generation Mississippian. He holds both a Bachelor and
52 Master of Arts degree in History from Mississippi College. He has
53 been recognized for his leadership in Mississippi's economic and
54 community development; and

55 WHEREAS, he was named one of the *Mississippi Business*
56 *Journal's* "Top Forty Under Forty" Business Leaders for 2001. He
57 was a member of the Mississippi Blues Commission, and is a member
58 of the Board of Directors of the University of Southern
59 Mississippi's Economic Development Advisory Board; and

60 WHEREAS, he is married to the former Lisa DeCell of Memphis,
61 Tennessee, and they have two sons, Porter and John Garrett, and
62 one daughter, Betsy. The Walters are members of First Baptist
63 Church of Jackson and reside in Ridgeland, Mississippi; and

64 WHEREAS, it is with great pride that we recognize the
65 accomplishments of this Mississippian whose administration of an
66 important federal program has enhanced the effective delivery of
67 services to hurricane victims and brought recognition to our
68 state:

69 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
70 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
71 we do hereby commend the dedicated public service of Nick Walters
72 as Mississippi's State Director of the United States Department of
73 Agriculture, Rural Development Program, on the occasion of the end
74 of his directorship, and extend to him and his family the best
75 wishes of the Legislature on this occasion.

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
77 Nick Walters and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.