SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 563

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION EXPRESSING THE INTENT OF THE LEGISLATURE THAT MISSISSIPPI SHALL COMMIT TO BECOME AN "EMPLOYMENT FIRST" STATE RELATIVE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES.

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature recognizes that Mississippians with disabilities have the ability and desire to seek employment in integrated settings, to be compensated fairly through competitive wages, and to achieve economic self-sufficiency as equal members of the workforce; and

WHEREAS, Mississippians with disabilities have a right to the opportunity for competitive employment; and in order to achieve meaningful and competitive employment for persons with disabilities, employment opportunities in fully integrated work settings shall be the first and priority option explored in the service planning for working-age persons with disabilities. Henceforth, Mississippi will be known as an "Employment First" state; and

WHEREAS, "disability" is defined, with respect to an individual, as a physical or mental impairment that substantially
limits one or more major life activities of such individual with
record of such impairment; and

WHEREAS, "competitive employment" means work in the
competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or
part-time basis in an integrated setting and for which a person
with a disability is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but
not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the
employer for the same or similar work performed by persons without
disabilities; and

WHEREAS, "integrated setting" means with respect to an
employment outcome, a setting typically found in the community in
which persons with disabilities interact with persons without
disabilities, other than persons without disabilities who are
providing services to those persons with disabilities, to the same
extent that persons without disabilities in comparable positions
interact with other persons; and

WHEREAS, Mississippian with disabilities are a largely
untapped resource for employers and the hiring of Mississippian
with disabilities represents a viable business solution to meet
the needs of employers while providing opportunities for
individuals with disabilities to use their strengths and their
skills toward the economic good of the state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
the State of Mississippi shall commit to become an "Employment First" State as follows:

(a) State agencies that provide services and support to persons with disabilities shall coordinate efforts and collaborate within and among such agencies to ensure that state programs, policies, procedures and funding support competitive employment in integrated settings for persons with disabilities who are of working age.

(b) All state agencies shall, whenever feasible, share data and information across systems in order to track progress toward full implementation of "Employment First" and shall adopt measurable goals and objectives to promote assessment of progress in implementing this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution shall be transmitted to the Governor and the State Personnel Board for distribution to state agencies and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.