

By: Representative Lamar

To: Universities and
Colleges

HOUSE BILL NO. 851

1 AN ACT TO PROHIBIT THE STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING
2 AND THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES FROM DENYING RECOGNITION,
3 PRIVILEGES OR BENEFITS TO A STUDENT ORGANIZATION ON THE BASIS OF
4 RELIGIOUS CONTENT OF THE ORGANIZATION'S SPEECH OR THE MANNER IN
5 WHICH THE ORGANIZATION DETERMINES ITS ORGANIZATIONAL AFFAIRS; AND
6 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

8 **SECTION 1.** (1) As used in this section, the term "state
9 higher education institution" includes each state institution of
10 higher learning named in Section 37-101-1 and each public
11 community or junior college in Mississippi.

12 (2) A state higher education institution that grants
13 recognition to any student organization or group may not
14 discriminate against or deny recognition of, equal access or a
15 fair opportunity to any student organization or group on the basis
16 of the religious content of the organization's or group's speech,
17 including, but not limited to, worship.

18 (3) A religious student organization may determine that the
19 following activities are in furtherance of the organization's



20 religious mission and that only persons committed to that mission
21 should conduct such activities:

- 22 (a) Ordering the organization's internal affairs;
- 23 (b) Selecting the organization's leaders and members;
- 24 (c) Defining the organization's doctrines; and
- 25 (d) Resolving the organization's disputes.

26 (4) A state higher education institution may not deny
27 recognition of or any privilege or benefit to a student
28 organization or group that exercises its rights under subsection
29 (3) of this section.

30 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
31 and after July 1, 2015.

