

By: Senator(s) Fillingane, Carmichael,  
Dearing, Frazier, Jackson (11th), Jackson  
(32nd), Kirby, Norwood, Simmons (12th),  
Stone, Watson

To: Rules

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 543

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE  
2 SELFLESS SERVICE AND DEDICATED CAREER OF ROBERT R. LATHAM, JR.,  
3 UPON HIS RETIREMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI  
4 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY.

5 WHEREAS, after 30 years of public service, as of January 31,  
6 2016, Robert R. Latham, Jr., Executive Director of the Mississippi  
7 Emergency Management Agency and a native of Senatobia,  
8 Mississippi, will end his career in public service to the citizens  
9 of Mississippi upon his retirement; and

10 WHEREAS, Robert Latham served as Director of MEMA under  
11 Governors Ronnie Musgrove and Haley Barbour from 2000-2006,  
12 helping lead the state's response and recovery during and after  
13 Hurricane Katrina. He returned to the agency at the request of  
14 Governor Bryant on January 10, 2012. After the September 11  
15 attacks, Musgrove appointed Latham as his Homeland Security  
16 Adviser, a position he held for two years, overseeing the state's  
17 homeland security activities, including the development of the  
18 state's first homeland security strategy, managing more than \$65  
19 Million in homeland security funding and developing the state's



20 regional response capability through the fielding of nine regional  
21 response teams. Latham retired from public service and entered  
22 the private sector in 2006, working as an Emergency Management and  
23 Homeland Security Consultant for several companies; and

24 WHEREAS, as MEMA Director, Robert Latham has overseen more  
25 than 50 Governor's States of Emergency, the response to and  
26 recovery from 15 Presidential Disaster Declarations, including  
27 Hurricane Katrina. Latham has served on the Mississippi Wireless  
28 Communications Commission and the Mississippi Coordinating Council  
29 for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems. "Helping  
30 this state become better prepared is an accomplishment I will  
31 always be proud of, but the most rewarding experiences for me have  
32 been helping people who have lost everything in a disaster and  
33 offering hope for their future," Latham said. "I will be forever  
34 grateful for the opportunities I have had in the more than 10  
35 years as MEMA Executive Director"; and

36 WHEREAS, Latham also served as Tate County Emergency  
37 Management Director from 1995-2000, and as a firefighter for  
38 Senatobia Fire and Rescue from 1978-2000. He was the Senatobia  
39 Fire Chief for 18 years. Latham also retired as an Operations  
40 Sergeant Major with the Mississippi Army National Guard in June  
41 1995; and

42 WHEREAS, during his tenure at MEMA, Robert Latham had the  
43 vision to ensure federal funding to help build a state-of-the-art  
44 emergency operations center and to purchase a mobile operations



45 unit, to increase the state's county emergency management programs  
46 from 46 to all 82 counties to ensure that all local governments in  
47 the state are prepared to respond and recover from future  
48 disasters; and

49 WHEREAS, Mr. Latham also served on various committees and  
50 organizations, including two terms as President for the Central  
51 United States Earthquake Consortium, Chairmanship of the National  
52 Emergency Management Association's Legislative Committee, and  
53 lifetime membership to the Mississippi Civil Defense/Emergency  
54 Management Association, an organization that recognized him as the  
55 Emergency Manager of the Year Award in 2000; and

56 WHEREAS, Robert Latham was also presented with many awards  
57 and accommodations during his career for his lifelong service to  
58 always help further the cause of emergency management not only  
59 throughout Mississippi but the entire United States, as it was his  
60 passion to ensure that public education about disaster  
61 preparedness was a forefront of the Mississippi Emergency  
62 Management Agency; and

63 WHEREAS, Robert L. Latham paid tribute to his staff and  
64 colleagues: "The MEMA staff is resilient much like  
65 Mississippians. When met with disaster or hardship, MEMA staff  
66 has made the tough decisions and made personal sacrifices to  
67 ensure that the state can prepare for, respond to and recover from  
68 disasters. I cannot say enough about how much I appreciate every  
69 staff member at MEMA, from the Executive Staff to the



70 Administrative Assistants, and the sacrifices and contributions  
71 each one of them has made in times of crisis to get the job done,  
72 and help citizens and communities get back on their feet. My wife  
73 Charlotte put her life on hold to let me do what I love to do. My  
74 two sons, Robert, Jr., and Steven, have stood by my side when I  
75 had to come into the office for anything from a hurricane to an  
76 ice storm. I look forward to spending more time with my family in  
77 the coming months and years. The Director can only provide the  
78 leadership and foster a positive work environment that allows  
79 employees to succeed. When provided a vision, driven by a moral  
80 compass, and the tools, employees can achieve the unimaginable.  
81 To the people of Mississippi: I have seen Mississippians when  
82 things couldn't be any worse. I have never seen a more resilient  
83 group of people. They have taught me so much about strength and  
84 perseverance;" and it is with great pride that we recognize the  
85 diligence of this public employee who has unselfishly given of his  
86 time and energy to provide a safer and better means of living to  
87 all the citizens of this state, and we commend his record of  
88 achievement and legacy of leadership and dedication to all in  
89 Mississippi:

90 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
91 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That  
92 we do hereby recognize Robert R. Latham on the occasion of his  
93 retirement from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and



94 extend warmest wishes for continued success in all his future  
95 endeavors.

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
97 Robert R. Latham, Jr., forwarded to the Mississippi Emergency  
98 Management Agency, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

