

By: Senator(s) Harkins, Blount, Browning,  
Burton, Caughman, Chassaniol, Clarke,  
Dearing, Fillingane, Frazier, Hopson, Jackson  
(32nd), Jackson (15th), Jolly, Kirby, Massey,  
McMahan, Michel, Turner-Ford, Watson

To: Rules

## SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 501

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND CONGRATULATING  
2 PRESIDENT MARK KEENUM AND THE FACULTY OF MISSISSIPPI STATE  
3 UNIVERSITY FOR RECEIVING A CHAPTER OF PHI BETA KAPPA, THE NATION'S  
4 MOST PRESTIGIOUS HONOR SOCIETY.

5 WHEREAS, we join the students, faculty and administration of  
6 Mississippi State University in celebrating the award of a chapter  
7 of Phi Beta Kappa Society on August 3, 2018, after a rigorous,  
8 multiyear review. This prestigious honor symbolizes Mississippi  
9 State University's commitment to pursuing academic excellence  
10 across all disciplines. Only 10% of United States colleges and  
11 universities shelter Phi Beta Kappa chapters; and

12 WHEREAS, "The granting of a Phi Beta Kappa chapter to  
13 Mississippi State is a testament to the outstanding faculty and  
14 administrators who have been working toward this most significant  
15 achievement," said Mississippi State University President Mark E.  
16 Keenum; and

17 WHEREAS, membership in Phi Beta Kappa is reserved for the  
18 best and brightest undergraduates majoring in the arts and  
19 sciences. They are chosen through a highly selective and



20 merit-based invitation process. The vote to grant Mississippi  
21 State a chapter came on August 3, 2018, during proceedings of Phi  
22 Beta Kappa's 45th Triennial Council in Boston. "It has been a  
23 40-year journey for us to reach this milestone," Dr. Keenum said;  
24 and

25 WHEREAS, Mississippi State University's first application was  
26 submitted in 1979 by Morris "Bill" Collins, the Founding Director  
27 of the Stennis Institute of Government. Nancy Hargrove, now a  
28 Giles Distinguished Professor Emerita of English, led the 1982  
29 submission. Leslie Bauman, now Professor Emerita in the  
30 Department of Physics and Astronomy, led application initiatives  
31 in 1985, 1988, 2000 and 2003. Since 2007, the application effort  
32 has been led by Robert West, a Professor in the Department of  
33 English who was inducted into the Honor Society as an  
34 undergraduate at Wake Forest University; and

35 WHEREAS, a charter is granted to Phi Beta Kappa members of  
36 the faculty, not the university itself. For the chapter to be  
37 maintained, members should comprise at least 10% of the full-time  
38 arts and sciences teaching faculty. Keenum noted that for decades  
39 Mississippi State's top students have competed successfully for  
40 distinguished scholarships and fellowships. "I would put our  
41 students' performance up against any other university because the  
42 results speak for themselves," said Keenum. Recent examples from  
43 the past few years include Rhodes Scholar Field Brown of Vicksburg  
44 and two additional Rhodes finalists; Gates Cambridge Scholar Lucas



45 Ferguson of Batesville; four Goldwater Scholars, including 2018  
46 winner Nic Ezzell of Laurel, and five Goldwater Honorable  
47 Mentions; Boren Scholar Donielle Allen of McCalla, Alabama; two  
48 Truman Scholars, Jamie Aron and Natalie Jones, both of Flowood;  
49 and several Fulbright recipients; and

50 WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that our exceptional students  
51 will now be eligible for consideration of Phi Beta Kappa  
52 membership, and we look forward to the induction of our Inaugural  
53 Class of Scholars in the spring of 2019. Provost and Executive  
54 Vice President Judy Bonner joined Dr. Keenum and West in Boston  
55 for the Triennial Council, along with Rick Travis, Dean of the  
56 College of Arts and Sciences, Christopher Snyder, Dean of the  
57 Shackouls Honors College, and Molly Zuckerman, an Associate  
58 Professor of Anthropology and Phi Beta Kappa Faculty  
59 Representative; and

60 WHEREAS, founded at the College of William and Mary in 1776,  
61 Phi Beta Kappa members include 17 U.S. Presidents, 40 Justices of  
62 the U.S. Supreme Court, and more than 140 winners of the Nobel  
63 Prize. Mississippi State University is creating a One Million  
64 Dollar endowment to support the university's new Phi Beta Kappa  
65 chapter; and it is with great pride that we join the academic  
66 community of Mississippi's Institutions of Higher Education in  
67 commending this high honor:

68 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF  
69 MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That



70 we do hereby recognize and congratulate President Mark Keenum and  
71 the faculty of Mississippi State University for receiving a  
72 chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's most prestigious Honor  
73 Society, and extend our best wishes to Mississippi State  
74 University on this auspicious occasion.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to  
76 Dr. Keenum, forwarded to the Board of Trustees of State  
77 Institutions of Higher Learning, and made available to the Capitol  
78 Press Corps.

