

By: Representative Holloway

To: Rules

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 83

1 A RESOLUTION COMMENDING THE DISTINGUISHED AND LAUDABLE  
2 LEGISLATIVE CAREER OF FORMER REPRESENTATIVE, THE HONORABLE DEBRA  
3 HENDRICKS GIBBS AND CONGRATULATING HER UPON BEING ELECTED TO THE  
4 BENCH AS CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE OF DISTRICT 7, PLACE 2, HINDS COUNTY,  
5 MISSISSIPPI.

6 WHEREAS, in the November 29, 2022, runoff election, the  
7 citizens of Hinds County returned to the polls to elect former  
8 State Representative and daughter of the late Mrs. Ann Augusta  
9 Hendricks Page, the Honorable Debra Hendricks Gibbs, to the post  
10 of Circuit Court Judge of District 7, Place 2, Hinds County,  
11 Mississippi, while simultaneously relaying bittersweet  
12 confirmation of an official changing of the guard in the post held  
13 for the last six years by a visionary leader, friend, lawmaker and  
14 respected jurist; and

15 WHEREAS, the distinguished Gentle Lady from Hinds County,  
16 Mississippi, an honored and cherished member of the Mississippi  
17 House of Representatives, revered for her legal expertise and  
18 credible passion for public service, Representative Debra  
19 Hendricks Gibbs's election to the bench brings a climactic end to



20 the third year of her second term of legislative service as a  
21 member of the House of Representatives from District 72, which  
22 encompasses portions of Hinds and Madison Counties, after having  
23 been initially elected in a special election runoff held on  
24 September 13, 2016; and

25 WHEREAS, a native of Gulfport, Mississippi, Representative  
26 Gibbs has made the fulfillment of public service the extent of her  
27 life's work and professional career, serving both the public and  
28 private sectors, after earning her baccalaureate degree in  
29 business administration from the University of Southern  
30 Mississippi and M.B.A. from Mississippi College; and

31 WHEREAS, before embarking upon her journey of jurisprudence,  
32 Representative Gibbs initially commenced her professional career  
33 as an accountant with Mississippi Power and Light (now Entergy)  
34 before transferring to the realm of collegiate academia as  
35 instructor and founding Director of Center for Professional  
36 Development for Jackson State University, and subsequent thereto,  
37 accepting a position as Director of Accounting and Finance for the  
38 Mississippi Department of Human Services, where she formulated  
39 policies and regulations to ensure agency compliance with state  
40 and federal objections; and

41 WHEREAS, it was during her tenure at MDHS as the agency's  
42 guardian of compliance that Representative Gibbs was compelled to  
43 make a return to the classroom, not in an instructor's capacity,  
44 but once again assuming the role of an eager and ambitious student



45 of law, when she enrolled in Mississippi College School of Law,  
46 subjecting herself to the rigorous make-or-break Socratic method  
47 employed by law professors and completing the requisite courses of  
48 study to obtain her juris doctorate before ultimately sitting for  
49 and passing the Mississippi Bar Examination, which led to her  
50 admission to the state's judiciary; and

51 WHEREAS, now equipped with an adept understanding of the  
52 letter and analysis of the law, Representative Gibbs returned to  
53 an immersive experience in the tapestry of public service as a law  
54 clerk at the Mississippi Supreme Court, familiarizing herself with  
55 a keen awareness of court etiquette that guided her path as a  
56 litigious arbiter of the law as she prepared to take flight as a  
57 solo practitioner, wherein such capacity, her objectivity and  
58 fairness positioned her for appointment as commissioner of the  
59 Mississippi Workers Compensation Commission; and

60 WHEREAS, after concluding her appointment as commissioner,  
61 and having effectively served in the executive and judicial  
62 branches of government, Representative Gibbs was poised to  
63 successfully fulfill her legislative role at the time of her  
64 election and vowed to be a conduit of innovative and progressive  
65 collaboration between all three branches of government, as well as  
66 local elected officials, while successfully balancing dual roles  
67 as an officer of the court and state policymaker to ensure a  
68 better quality of life for all, by forging a trail of consensus  
69 and relationship building which has manifested itself in the



70 allocation of state funding for District 72 in millions of  
71 dollars; and

72 WHEREAS, gaining stature as a prominent yet formidable  
73 politician, the Lady from Hinds' abilities and talent were  
74 immediately recognized by her colleagues, and when combined with  
75 her strong work ethic, she quickly rose from freshman lawmaker and  
76 Vice Chairman of the House Tourism Committee, which oversees  
77 policy that governs the state's fourth largest stream of commerce,  
78 which generated more than \$677 Million in revenue for the State  
79 General Fund in 2021, to an influential purveyor of equity, who  
80 remained true to her promise of accountability through  
81 implementation of her townhall constituent-based accessibility  
82 with the District 72 Day; and

83 WHEREAS, over the course of her storied legislative career,  
84 Representative Gibbs's diligence and devotion to the office to  
85 which she was elected have been fueled by the desire to make the  
86 quality of life better for her immediate constituency base and the  
87 entire citizenry of the Hospitality State, as she has endeavored  
88 with feverish propensity through her vocal participation on the  
89 House committees to which she was assigned, including: Banking  
90 and Financial Services, Education, Ethics, Judiciary A, Judiciary  
91 B, Judiciary En Banc, Medicaid, Municipalities and Tourism; and

92 WHEREAS, Representative Gibbs's love and deeply felt respect  
93 for the Legislature as a hallowed institution has led her to fight  
94 to preserve and nurture its integrity, becoming a guardian of this



95 democratic institution as one who equally held a lion's share in  
96 the stake of advancing the direction of the state's economic,  
97 educational and political climate, a zealous advocacy that allowed  
98 her to be chosen as a Toll Fellow by the Council of State  
99 Government, one of the nation's most prestigious leadership  
100 development programs; and

101 WHEREAS, during her tenure in the House, Representative Gibbs  
102 maintained a strong role in every meaningful initiative addressed  
103 by the Mississippi Legislature, including economic development,  
104 fiscal affairs, education, gaming, public health, transportation,  
105 agriculture, and election reform initiatives and programs; and

106 WHEREAS, a rare leader who was able to lead effectively and  
107 serve with humility while demonstrating fair and even-handed  
108 stewardship of the office to which she was elected, Representative  
109 Gibbs is equally committed to the fulfillment of her social and  
110 civic obligations, as made evident through her community activism  
111 and professional associations, including: New Hope Baptist  
112 Church; The LeFleur's Bluff (MS) Chapter of the Links, Inc.; Jack  
113 and Jill of America, Inc. (Life Member); Alpha Kappa Alpha  
114 Sorority, Inc. (Life Member); Mississippi Bar Association;  
115 Magnolia Bar Association; Mississippi Women Lawyers Association;  
116 Women for Progress of Mississippi, Inc.; Metro Jackson Black Women  
117 Lawyers Association; and the Capital Area Bar Association; and

118 WHEREAS, because of her steadfast allegiance to the legal  
119 community and to the system of governing with a servant's heart,



120 Representative Gibbs' service has been rewarded with recognitions  
121 from the numerous entities of which she is a member, as well as  
122 those she has been chosen to serve as their voice, including, but  
123 not limited to: Mississippi Bar Association's Lawyer Citizenship  
124 Award; State Parent Teacher Association's Parent of the Year  
125 Award; Leadership Service Honoree by the Parents for Public  
126 Schools; Graduate of Leadership Mississippi; Graduate of  
127 Leadership Jackson; Girl Scouts of Greater Mississippi's Women of  
128 Distinction Award; and the Metro Jackson Black Women Lawyers  
129 Association's Top Ten Legal Trailblazer Award; and

130 WHEREAS, admired for her ability for building consensus in  
131 the Legislature regardless of the issues at hand, it is with the  
132 same deference that her ascent to the bench is both essential and  
133 most appropriate to carry forward the service to the citizens of  
134 Hinds County, who avail themselves of the judicial system; and

135 WHEREAS, the Lady from Hinds exchanged the title of  
136 Representative Gibbs for that of Judge Gibbs, and resigned the  
137 title "Gentle Lady" for that of "Your Honor," as she makes her  
138 departure from the stained glass ceiling and decorative walls of  
139 the chamber of the Mississippi House of Representatives for a  
140 private judge's chamber, where her legal expertise and experience  
141 as a well-versed arbiter of the law will aid her in the  
142 even-handed issuance of justice; and

143 WHEREAS, the members of this Legislature will cherish the  
144 bond and common goals for the betterment of our great state shared



145 with Representative Gibbs, and that her impeccable service was  
146 unparalleled to the Mississippi Legislature, the constituents of  
147 District 72 and to this great state; and

148 WHEREAS, the service of Representative Gibbs would be without  
149 honor but for the continued support, encouragement and love of her  
150 loving husband, Robert L. Gibbs, and their two children, Ariana N.  
151 Gibbs and Justis R. Gibbs II, each of whom she considers her  
152 greatest accomplishments, and who bestow upon her the titles of  
153 wife and mother; and

154 WHEREAS, it is the policy of the House of Representatives to  
155 honor the indelible legacy of remarkable service of our former  
156 colleague and friend, Representative Debra Hendricks Gibbs, who  
157 represented her district, this body and the people of this state  
158 with honor and intrepid dignity:

159 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF  
160 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, That we do hereby  
161 commend the distinguished and laudable legislative career of  
162 former Representative Debra Hendricks Gibbs, congratulate her upon  
163 being elected to the bench as the Circuit Court Judge of District  
164 7, Place 2, Hinds County, Mississippi, and express fondest respect  
165 and best wishes for continued success in this newly elected role  
166 as judge and all her future endeavors.

167 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be  
168 furnished to Honorable Judge Debra Hendricks Gibbs and to the  
169 members of the Capitol Press Corps.

