MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2004

By: Senator(s) Horhn, Simmons, Walls, Frazier, Thomas, Butler, Jackson (11th), Harden, Jackson (32nd), Jordan, Turner, Albritton, Chamberlin, Clarke, Dawkins, Dearing, Flowers, King, Little, Moffatt, Morgan, Nunnelee, Ross, Tollison, White, Williamson

To: Rules

# SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 617

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMEMORATING THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LANDMARK UNITED STATES SUPREME COURT DECISION IN THE CASE OF *BROWN V. BOARD OF EDUCATION.*

WHEREAS, on May 17, 1954, the U.S. Supreme Court in *Brown v. Board of Education* ruled unanimously that segregation of public schools "solely on the basis of race" denied black children equal educational opportunity, even though "physical facilities and other 'tangible' factors may have been equal." The plaintiff's case was argued by Thurgood Marshall, later to become the first black Supreme Court Justice.; and

WHEREAS, May 17, 2004, will mark the 50th Anniversary of the Court's decision to desegregate America's public schools. This ruling paved the way for significant opportunities in our society-especially for equal justice, fairness and education. We've kicked off our own celebration to raise awareness about the horizons of opportunities opened up by that decision and the continuing need to make real improvements in public education today that fulfill the promise of equal opportunity to a quality education and great schools for every child; and

WHEREAS, in this landmark decision, the U.S. Supreme Court stated: "We conclude that in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal"; and

WHEREAS, the Court looked at educational conditions of the segregated African American and white students in Clarendon, South Carolina, New Castle, Delaware, Prince Edward, Virginia, Topeka, Kansas, and the District of Columbia. The findings were compiled

for lower courts before reaching the Supreme Court. These conditions included: teacher qualifications; pupil-teacher ratio; curricula; school buildings and facilities; transportation modes and travel time to and from school and extracurricular activities; and

WHEREAS, the Court found that the racial segregation affected students' motivation and retarded education and mental development. Learning is hurt by segregation, racism, stereotypes or reduced student achievement expectations; and

WHEREAS, to commemorate this landmark decision, the Census Bureau has assembled data on the educational attainment and school enrollment of blacks-then and now:

**Enrollment:** 69% is the percentage of black children ages 5 and 6 who were enrolled in school in 1954. By 2002, enrollment of black children of those ages was 96%. 24% is the percentage of young, black adults ages 18 and 19 who were enrolled in school in 1954. In 2002, the comparable enrollment was 58%.

**High School Graduates:** 15% is the percentage of blacks age 25 and over in 1952 who were at least high school graduates. By 2002, this rate had risen to 79%. 1.6 Million is the number of blacks 25 years and over with at least a high school diploma in 1957. This number had risen to 16.0 million by 2002.

**College Graduates:** 2% is the percentage of blacks age 25 and over in 1952 who were college graduates. By 2002, the rate had risen to 17%. 252,000 is the number of blacks who had at least a bachelor's degree in 1957. In 2002, 3.5 million blacks had at least a bachelor's degree.

**Students:** 4.5 Million is the number of blacks enrolled in schools (nursery through college) in 1955. This number had risen to 11.7 million by 2002. 155,000 is the number of black college students in 1955. By 2002, this number

had risen to 2.3 million. 926,000 is the number of black high school students in 1955. In 2002, this number was 2.6 million; and

WHEREAS, the full effect of the *Brown* decision is yet to be realized. Our country is still struggling with issues concerning college admission standards, workplace diversity and Americans with disabilities; and

WHEREAS, Justice O'Connor in the *Grutter* decision espoused the legacy of *Brown*: "This Court has long recognized that 'education is the very foundation of good citizenship.' *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483, 493 (1954). For this reason, the diffusion of knowledge and opportunity through public institutions of higher education must be accessible to all individuals regardless of race of ethnicity. Effective participation by members of all racial and ethnic groups in the civic life of our Nation is essential if the dream of one Nation, indivisible is to be realized"; and

WHEREAS, the *Brown* decision paved the way for 50 years worth of school integration and diversity as well as significant fairness and justice opportunities throughout our society, and it is with pride that we celebrate the 50th anniversary of this landmark case to recommit our state to the promise of public education for all citizens:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the landmark United States Supreme Court decision in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 US 483 (1954), and recommit ourselves to its legacy.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be forwarded to the State Board of Education and State Superintendent of Education for dissemination to all public school districts in the State of Mississippi, and be made available to the Capitol Press Corps.