



MISSISSIPPI STATE
UNIVERSITY®

March 24, 2016

The Honorable Philip Gunn
Speaker of the House
P.O. Box 1018
Jackson, Mississippi 39205

Dear Speaker Gunn,

I am writing today on behalf of the wonderful young people who comprise the Mississippi State University Student Association and the distinguished scholars and educators represented by the MSU Robert Holland Faculty Senate to respectfully bring to your attention their substantial efforts to speak forcefully in the cause of changing the State Flag of the State of Mississippi.

As you know, in 2001, the MSU Faculty Senate and the MSU Student Association Senate voted overwhelmingly in support of changing the state flag of Mississippi prior to the failed statewide voter referendum on that question.

Last year, after the tragic atrocity at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, those same leadership groups on our campus again convened to speak to the issue of changing our state flag – again adopting formal resolutions in support of that action.

Certainly, I have a profound understanding that this is an emotional issue for people of good will who hold differing views. I have heard from individuals on both sides, and their views reinforce the point I made in a public statement released on July 9, 2015, that a state's flag should be unifying and not a symbol that divides us. I pray that we can have a renewed debate about the current state flag's future and that such a necessary discussion can be conducted in a respectful and civil manner.

I have stated publicly on multiple occasions that I support changing the state flag. I have been consistent in advocating for positive change on this issue and I will continue to do so. I have publicly applauded the actions of the MSU Student Association and the Robert Holland Faculty Senate for the passage of similar resolutions also calling for change by our state's elected leadership.

Unfortunately, the broader issue of actually changing our state flag will not be resolved on a university campus. Legally and politically, the authority and responsibility for actually changing or amending the state flag rests with our state's elected leaders.

Office of the President

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Earlier this month, I shared my views on this question during remarks at MSU's Black Alumni Weekend Gala and the support for state flag change by those loyal and involved Bulldogs was strong and unequivocal.

So that you might more fully appreciate the earnest and heartfelt beliefs of our faculty and student leadership, I enclose copies of resolutions from both the MSU Student Association and a resolution from the combined faculty senates of the state's universities.

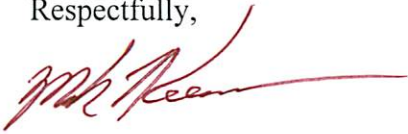
Likewise, I am sharing this information with the Governor and the Lieutenant Governor.

As you know, I have made my views on this issue known in personal visits with our elected executive and legislative branch officials. I have already expressed my beliefs to the leadership of the College Board. I am hopeful that the university's current stance on this issue – one that respects state law until the law is changed - positions me to speak effectively with our state's leaders in support of positive change as we move forward.

Thank you for your longstanding support for MSU and for the important role the university plays in moving Mississippi forward. Thank you for allowing me to utilize this means to share the hopes and aspirations of involved leaders among our students, faculty, and alumni with you.

I continue to be grateful for your friendship.

Respectfully,



Mark E. Keenum
President



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

SENATOR THOMAS

Appropriations Committee Chairman

SENATOR WALNE

Student Affairs Committee Chairman

54th 2nd Session

RESOLUTION 9

A RESOLUTION recognizing the need for the Mississippi State Legislature to examine the current state flag and ensure the flag represents the people of Mississippi.

WHEREAS, the SA Senate, as the united voice of the MSU Student Body, understands the importance of students and young people being involved in shaping the future of our state through an informed opinion and an active voice.

WHEREAS, the flag should be a symbol that unifies our citizens.

WHEREAS, Mississippi State University enrolls the highest percentage of African American students of any university in the Southeastern Conference and it is important that our students feel represented by our state flag.

WHEREAS, our flag should represent the state's promising future, one that can only become a reality through understanding our shared values and working together to better our schools, our state, and our nation.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Student Association Senate expresses the need for the legislature of the State of Mississippi to examine the current state flag and modify it in a way that acknowledges our important history, but also communicates that Mississippi's best days are ahead.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT, a copy of this Resolution will be sent to MSU President Mark Keenum, President of the Robert Holland Faculty Senate Dr. Cody Coyne, Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant, Mississippi Lt. Governor Tate Reeves, and Mississippi Speaker of the House Philip Gunn.

President Dodd

Date

Secretary Reeves

Date

Student Association

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Alcorn
State University

DELTA STATE UNIVERSITY



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY



Glenn F. Boyce, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Higher Education
Mississippi Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, Mississippi 39211

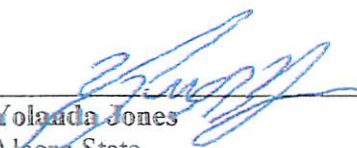
February 25, 2016

Resolution for Adoption

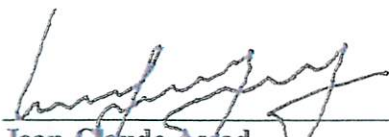
We, the undersigned and duly-elected University Faculty Senate Presidents in the State of Mississippi, request that dialog be initiated that considers an alternative design for a new state flag for Mississippi and that this proposal be brought to the attention of Governor Phil Bryant, Lt. Governor Tate Reeves and Speaker of the House of Representatives Philip Gunn.

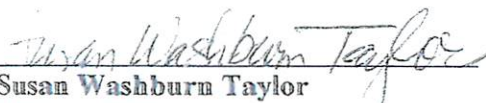
Respectfully submitted as representatives of our respective Faculty Senate Memberships,


Mississippi University Faculty Senate Presidents



Yolanda Jones
Alcorn State



Leslie Fadiga Stewart
Delta State University


Jean-Claude Astad
Jackson State University


Susan Washburn Taylor
Millsaps College


E.P. Coyne
Mississippi State University


Lee Crouse
Mississippi University for Women


Joseph Wahome
Mississippi Valley State University

Michael Barnett
University of Mississippi


Jennifer P. Anderson
University of Southern Mississippi


Stephen L. Rozman
Tougaloo College