

Chapter No. 2170

12/SS01/R1259.1

JN 1A5/56

***SENATE
CONCURRENT RESOLUTION
No. 621***

Originated in Senate

L. Welch

Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 621

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION COMMENDING AND CONGRATULATING FORMER MISSISSIPPI SUPREME COURT PRESIDING JUSTICE JAMES E. GRAVES, JR., OF CLINTON, MISSISSIPPI, UPON HIS CONFIRMATION AS THE FIRST AFRICAN-AMERICAN JUDGE FROM THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI TO BE APPOINTED TO THE UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE FIFTH CIRCUIT.

WHEREAS, on February 14, 2011, the United States Senate confirmed former Mississippi Supreme Court Presiding Justice James E. Graves, Jr., as Judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit; and

WHEREAS, Justice Graves, who was nominated by President Barack Obama in June 2011, is the first African-American Judge from Mississippi to be appointed to the Fifth Circuit Court. The Fifth Circuit Court is based in New Orleans and has jurisdiction over federal district courts in Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas; and

WHEREAS, Justice Graves was born and raised in Clinton, Mississippi, to a Baptist minister. He attended Sumner High School in Clinton and graduated as Valedictorian with the highest grade point average and ACT score in his class. Graves then attended Millsaps College and graduated in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology. After working at the Mississippi Department of Public Welfare for almost two years, he enrolled at Syracuse University College of Law, where he received his law degree in 1980. He also earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University in 1981; and

WHEREAS, Graves began his legal career as a staff attorney at Central Mississippi Legal Services in 1980. He then worked in the private practice of law for three years, before returning to public service work. Graves served as legal counsel for both the Health Law Division and the Human Services Division of the Mississippi Attorney General's office. He also worked as a Special Assistant Attorney General for the State of Mississippi and served as the Director of the Division of Child Support Enforcement in the Mississippi Department of Human Services; and

WHEREAS, in 1991, Governor Ray Mabus appointed Graves as a Circuit Court Judge in Hinds County, Mississippi. Graves was then elected to the position later that year in a special election, in which he received 77% of the votes cast. Graves was later reelected without opposition in 1994 and 1998. Graves was appointed to the Mississippi Supreme Court by Governor Ronnie Musgrove in 2001 and later won election to the court in 2004. Graves was the only African-American Justice on the court. The first African-Americans to serve on the Mississippi Supreme Court were Reuben Anderson, who served from 1985 to 1990, followed by Fred L. Banks, Jr., from 1991 to 2001; and

WHEREAS, Graves has served as a Teaching Team Member of the Trial Advocacy Workshop at Harvard Law School since 1998. He has also held the position of Adjunct Professor at Millsaps College, Tougaloo College and Jackson State University. Graves has taught courses in media law, civil rights law, and sociology of law and has been a Jurist in Residence at Syracuse University School of Law. Graves has also coached high school, college, and law school mock trial teams, including the Jackson Murrah High School Mock Trial Team that won the 2001 State Championship; and

WHEREAS, Justice Graves is deeply committed to working with Mississippi youth and has received numerous distinctions for his dedication to teaching, motivating and inspiring young people. These distinctions include the Jackson Public School District's

Parent of the Year Award in 2001, First Alternate for the State of Mississippi's Parent of the Year Award in 2001, the United States Department of Health and Human Services' Commissioner's Award in 2001, and the Mississippi Association of Educators' Humanized Education Award in 2002. Justice Graves currently serves as a board member for several organizations, including the Mississippi Children's Museum and the Mississippi Center for Education Innovation; and

WHEREAS, a renowned orator, Justice Graves frequently speaks at universities, schools, churches and conventions throughout the country. Justice Graves has been recognized by numerous organizations for his steadfast adherence to the principle of equal justice for all and for his outstanding ability as a Judge. In 2009, the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University selected him for the Maxwell Public Administration Award. In 2004, Justice Graves was a recipient of Millsaps College's Jim Livesay Service Award for service to the college and the community. In 2002, Justice Graves was awarded the Law Related Public Education Award by the Mississippi Bar Foundation for excellence in enhancing the public's understanding of the law and the legal system. Other distinctions include the National Conference of Black Mayors' President's Award, the Mississippi Chapter of the NAACP's Legal Award, the National Bar Association's Distinguished Jurist Award, the National Conference of Black Lawyers Judge of the Year Award, and the Hinds County Bar Association's Innovation Award; and

WHEREAS, Graves is married to Dr. Bettye Ramsey Graves, Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management at Jackson State University, and has three sons; and

WHEREAS, Justice Graves joins nine Mississippi jurists who have been named to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in the history of the court, and it is with great pride that we acknowledge this qualified, impartial Judge who brings a diverse

background of service to the bench and who has brought honor to
The Mississippi Bar and to our state:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF
MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That
we do hereby commend and congratulate Mississippi Presiding
Justice James E. Graves, Jr., of Clinton, Mississippi, upon his
confirmation as Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for
the Fifth Circuit on February 14, 2011, and extend our best wishes
to him and his family on this auspicious occasion.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to
Justice Graves, forwarded to Mississippi's congressional
delegation and the Mississippi Supreme Court, and made available
to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
March 28, 2012



PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
April 5, 2012



SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES