Chapter No. 2141
16/SS02/R321
cs / tb/lh

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 543

Originated in Senate Liz Welch Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 543

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE SELFLESS SERVICE AND DEDICATED CAREER OF ROBERT R. LATHAM, JR., UPON HIS RETIREMENT AS THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MISSISSIPPI EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY.

WHEREAS, after 30 years of public service, as of January 31, 2016, Robert R. Latham, Jr., Executive Director of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and a native of Senatobia, Mississippi, will end his career in public service to the citizens of Mississippi upon his retirement; and

WHEREAS, Robert Latham served as Director of MEMA under Governors Ronnie Musgrove and Haley Barbour from 2000-2006, helping lead the state's response and recovery during and after Hurricane Katrina. He returned to the agency at the request of Governor Bryant on January 10, 2012. After the September 11 attacks, Musgrove appointed Latham as his Homeland Security Adviser, a position he held for two years, overseeing the state's homeland security activities, including the development of the state's first homeland security strategy, managing more than $65

Million in homeland security funding and developing the state's regional response capability through the fielding of nine regional response teams. Latham retired from public service and entered the private sector in 2006, working as an Emergency Management and Homeland Security Consultant for several companies; and

WHEREAS, as MEMA Director, Robert Latham has overseen more than 50 Governor's States of Emergency, the response to and recovery from 15 Presidential Disaster Declarations, including Hurricane Katrina. Latham has served on the Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission and the Mississippi Coordinating Council for Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems. "Helping this state become better prepared is an accomplishment I will always be proud of, but the most rewarding experiences for me have been helping people who have lost everything in a disaster and offering hope for their future," Latham said. "I will be forever grateful for the opportunities I have had in the more than 10 years as MEMA Executive Director"; and

WHEREAS, Latham also served as Tate County Emergency Management Director from 1995-2000, and as a firefighter for Senatobia Fire and Rescue from 1978-2000. He was the Senatobia Fire Chief for 18 years. Latham also retired as an Operations Sergeant Major with the Mississippi Army National Guard in June 1995; and

WHEREAS, during his tenure at MEMA, Robert Latham had the vision to ensure federal funding to help build a state-of-the-art

emergency operations center and to purchase a mobile operations unit, to increase the state's county emergency management programs from 46 to all 82 counties to ensure that all local governments in the state are prepared to respond and recover from future disasters; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Latham also served on various committees and organizations, including two terms as President for the Central United States Earthquake Consortium, Chairmanship of the National Emergency Management Association's Legislative Committee, and lifetime membership to the Mississippi Civil Defense/Emergency Management Association, an organization that recognized him as the Emergency Manager of the Year Award in 2000; and

WHEREAS, Robert Latham was also presented with many awards and accommodations during his career for his lifelong service to always help further the cause of emergency management not only throughout Mississippi but the entire United States, as it was his passion to ensure that public education about disaster preparedness was a forefront of the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency; and

WHEREAS, Robert L. Latham paid tribute to his staff and colleagues: "The MEMA staff is resilient much like Mississippians. When met with disaster or hardship, MEMA staff has made the tough decisions and made personal sacrifices to ensure that the state can prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters. I cannot say enough about how much I appreciate every

staff member at MEMA, from the Executive Staff to the Administrative Assistants, and the sacrifices and contributions each one of them has made in times of crisis to get the job done, and help citizens and communities get back on their feet. My wife Charlotte put her life on hold to let me do what I love to do. My two sons, Robert, Jr., and Steven, have stood by my side when I had to come into the office for anything from a hurricane to an ice storm. I look forward to spending more time with my family in the coming months and years. The Director can only provide the leadership and foster a positive work environment that allows employees to succeed. When provided a vision, driven by a moral compass, and the tools, employees can achieve the unimaginable. To the people of Mississippi: I have seen Mississippians when things couldn't be any worse. I have never seen a more resilient group of people. They have taught me so much about strength and perseverance;" and it is with great pride that we recognize the diligence of this public employee who has unselfishly given of his time and energy to provide a safer and better means of living to all the citizens of this state, and we commend his record of achievement and legacy of leadership and dedication to all in Mississippi:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby recognize Robert R. Latham on the occasion of his retirement from the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency and

extend warmest wishes for continued success in all his future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Robert R. Latham, Jr., forwarded to the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
January 26, 2016

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 27, 2016

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES