Chapter No. 2069
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MC /BW/NB

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 503

Originated in Senate Liz Welch Secretary

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A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION MOURNING THE LOSS AND COMMENDING THE LIFE AND PUBLIC SERVICE OF SENATOR ALICE V. HARDEN AND EXPRESSING THE SYMPATHY OF THE LEGISLATURE ON HER PASSING.

WHEREAS, the Legislature and the State of Mississippi lost a wonderful friend, colleague, advocate for education, community leader and enlightened lawmaker with the death of State Senator Alice V. Harden, Senate District 28, of Jackson, Mississippi, on December 6, 2012. Alice Rae Varnado Harden was the first black woman to serve in the Mississippi State Senate. Senator Harden's body laid in state in the foyer of the Senate Chamber on Thursday, December 13, 2012; and

WHEREAS, representing Senate District 28 of Hinds County, Alice was a progressive leader whose relentless efforts have afforded her the opportunity to believe in the State of Mississippi and its people. She laid the groundwork necessary for establishing positive and open relations with educators, parents, religious leaders, community leaders, and citizens throughout the state, and the nation; and

WHEREAS, Senator Harden has an impressive record of accomplishments that tell the whole story: was a graduate of Jackson State University (B.S., M.S., Ed.) and served 14 years as a classroom teacher and educator. She was consistently involved in community-based groups throughout the state. Senator Harden was a lifetime member of the Jackson State University National Alumni Association as well as a lifetime member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). She also served as President of the Mississippi Federation of Democratic Women, Chair of the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus, Chair of the Mississippi Advisory Committee to the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, and Chair of the Education Committee of the Southern Legislative Conference. She was a member of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority (Beta Delta Omega Chapter), the National Council of Negro Women, the Mary Church Terrell Literacy Club, the Democratic National Committee Women for Mississippi, the Steering Committee of Southern Women in Public Service, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Black Caucus of State Legislators. Alice has served and was currently serving as the Commissioner to the Education Commission of the States; and

WHEREAS, during her 24-year tenure in the Mississippi Senate, Senator Harden has served as chairperson of the Senate Elections Committee, the Senate Education Committee, and the Universities and Colleges Committee. She was currently serving on the

following committees in the Mississippi State Senate: Chairman, Enrolled Bills Committee; Member, Universities and Colleges Committee; Appropriations Committee; Corrections Committee; Education Committee; Elections Committee; Fees, Salaries and Administration Committee; and the Interstate and Federal Cooperation Committee; and

WHEREAS, Senator Harden was responsible for a very important event in Mississippi Senate history, when in the first year of Lieutenant Governor Musgrove's administration she convinced the Senate to install the first female restroom adjacent to the Senate Chamber. Prior to that time female Senators and staff had to walk to the second floor stairwell to use the bathroom; and

WHEREAS, Alice was born April 17, 1948, to John and Lula Mae Robinson Varnado in the Rose Hill Community of Magnolia, Mississippi (Pike County). She was the third of nine siblings. At an early age she united with St. James Missionary Baptist Church under the leadership of Reverend O.D. Brown. She was a faithful and committed member of the Sunday School, Baptist Training Union, Sanctuary Choir, Sunshine Band, Red Circle, Young Women's Auxiliary, Junior Matrons, and General Missionary Baptist Convention. She also worked with Vacation Bible School; and

WHEREAS, she attended Isable Elementary School and Jim Hill Junior/Senior High School in Jackson, Mississippi. She was a 1970 graduate of Jackson State University earning a Bachelor's Degree in Health and Physical Education and a Master's Degree in Health

and Physical Education in 1976. She also completed teacher certification requirements in General Science at Jackson State University and was currently a Doctoral student majoring in Educational Leadership at the University of Southern Mississippi. After completing her bachelor's degree, Alice entered into the education workforce. Her passion for education led her to various educational institutions. She taught at Callaway High School, Forest Hill High School, and Brinkley Junior High School; and

WHEREAS, on November 22, 1976, Alice was united in Holy Matrimony to Dennis L. Harden; and

WHEREAS, in 1984, Alice Harden was elected President of the Mississippi Association of Educators. MAE is the state's largest teacher organization. It was during her tenure as President that the state's first teachers' strike was held in an effort to improve teacher salaries and working conditions. She served three consecutive years as President of MAE before being elected to the Senate in 1988; and

WHEREAS, Alice Harden was the first black Senator to serve as Chair of the Senate Education Committee and led passage of teacher education reform legislation, child care reform legislation and the first school district conservatorship program. During her service on Appropriations Conference Committees, Senator Harden was instrumental in securing funding for the Transition Dormitory at Jackson State University; and

WHEREAS, former Governor William Winter stated, "Her interest was in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood in Jackson where she lived, so that children who came out of those neighborhoods would be better prepared to learn." Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves stated, "As a former teacher, Senator Harden brought her passion for improving Mississippi's schools and universities to the State Senate." Governor Phil Bryant stated, "Senator Alice Harden was a pioneer for civil rights and a staunch supporter of public education." Former Lieutenant Governor Amy Tuck stated, "Senator Harden was not only a colleague in the State Senate, but also a close friend." "She always looked out for the best interest of her constituents," Representative Alice Clarke stated. "When we needed a voice in the Senate, or in the community, we knew Alice would be there"; and

WHEREAS, Alice lived an adventurous, dedicated, committed, and service-oriented life. She loved to cook, travel, run other people's business and tell them what to do. If she saw a good fight, she got in it. She built her life on sewing and not reaping. Her heartfelt labor was always for the benefit of the people of her Senatorial District, City of Jackson, the State of Mississippi, and throughout the United States. Volumes could be written about the number of people Alice counseled, inspired, encouraged, mentored, and helped along the way in their lives. She will be remembered as a statesperson, friend, servant, lover of family, community, and her God; and

WHEREAS, Alice leaves to cherish her memory and carry on her legacy, her husband: Dennis L. Harden of Jackson Mississippi; one son: Sachem of Jackson, Mississippi; two brothers: Attorney Jerry Wayne Varnado (Marilyn) of Oakland, California; John O. Varnado, Jr. (Carolyn) of Jackson, Mississippi; six sisters, Mildred V. Robinson (Willie) of Nashville, Tennessee; Wilma V. Butler of Jackson Mississippi; Dr. Phillis W. Varnado of Jacksonville, Florida; Shirley Varnado of Jackson, Mississippi; Sharon V. Porter (Andrew) of Conyers, Georgia; and Jacqueline V. Jackson (Wilton) of Jackson, Mississippi; mother-in-law: Mrs. Pearl Beatrice Harden, Jackson, Mississippi; two brothers-in-law, Rodney Harden of California; Carl Harden (Catherine) of Jackson, Mississippi; two sisters-in-law: Peggy Harden-Wilson and Debra Sue Williams (Oatis) of Jackson, Mississippi; three aunts: Mary Varnado Stewart (Floyd) of Broadview, Illinois; Macille Rayborn Varnado and Estee Downs of Magnolia, Mississippi; one uncle: Walter C. Robinson (Margaret) of Fort Worth, Texas; a special niece: Tamarra Grace Butler of Jackson, Mississippi; a special caregiver: Isis Young of Jackson, Mississippi and numerous nieces, nephews, cousins, and other relatives and friends; and

WHEREAS, Alice Harden was a tenacious advocate for individuals who had very little power. Her public service was exemplified by fairness and sound judgment, and she set the highest standard as leader in the Mississippi Senate and as a true friend:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN, That we do hereby mourn the loss and commend the life and legacy of public service of Senator Alice V. Harden of Jackson, Mississippi, and express to her husband Dennis L. Harden, son Sachem and surviving family the sympathy of the Legislature on her passing and our thanks for sharing Alice with us and with the State of Mississippi.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to the surviving family of Senator Alice V. Harden, forwarded to the Executive Director of Mississippi Association of Educators and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
January 9, 2013

Tate Reeves

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
January 15, 2013

Philip Gunn

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES