Chapter No. 2106
13/SS01/R1020
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SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 552

Originated in Senate Liz Welch Secretary

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 552

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING AND SALUTING MISSISSIPPI CORRECTIONS COMMISSIONER CHRISTOPHER EPPS AS THE LONGEST-SERVING COMMISSIONER IN THE STATE'S HISTORY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS INVESTITURE AS THE 102ND PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN CORRECTIONAL ASSOCIATION.

WHEREAS, as the state celebrates Black History Month, we acknowledge Mississippi Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps as the longest-serving Commissioner in the state's history. Commissioner Christopher B. Epps was recently honored when he was sworn in on January 28, 2013, as the 102nd President of the American Correctional Association (ACA). Epps, who will lead the organization for two years, took the oath at the ACA Winter Conference at the George R. Brown Convention Center; and

WHEREAS, after being sworn in, Epps stated he will seek to get more agencies ACA accredited and to increase the number of agencies receiving the ACA Golden Eagle Award. Currently, Mississippi is one of 18 recipients of the Golden Eagle. The award is presented to those who have accredited every facet of their agency. Mississippi Department of Corrections is the 14th

state correctional system in the nation to achieve this accomplishment. According to Commissioner Epps, getting fully accredited in Mississippi saved the state millions of dollars and led to the dismissal of one of the lengthiest lawsuits in the country. Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant said, "This is an honor for Commissioner Epps and brings distinction to our state." He also said he wants to continue focusing on health care issues, more rehabilitation and less administrative segregation. He also plans to push for more reentry programs; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Epps, in his 11th year as Mississippi's Corrections Chief, is uniquely qualified to assume the helm of this premier corrections organization. During his watch, the department has become number one in corrections reform, drawing visitors both from within and outside of the United States to discuss administrative segregation, commonly known as solitary confinement, and Managed Access in dealing with illicit cell phones. Christopher B. Epps was appointed Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) by former Governor Ronnie Musgrove on August 30, 2002, and by Governor Haley Barbour in 2004. Currently serving his 11th year, he was reappointed to the post on January 12, 2012, by Governor Phil Bryant; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Epps started his career with the Mississippi Department of Corrections in 1982 as a Correctional Officer at the Mississippi State Penitentiary. His extensive corrections experience with the MDOC includes: Chief of Staff,

Deputy Commissioner of Institutions, Deputy Commissioner of Community Corrections, Director of Offender Services, Deputy Superintendent, Chief of Security, Corrections Case Management Supervisor, Director of Treatment Services, and Corrections Case Manager. Additionally, he has served as Disciplinary Hearing Officer/Investigator and Director of Records for the agency; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Epps has held various leadership positions throughout his career in corrections and in the military. Having served in the Armed Forces since 1984, Commissioner Epps received an honorable discharge from the Mississippi Army National Guard after attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. The Commissioner is a member of the Association of State Correctional Administrators, serving on the Correctional Industries, Research and Technology, Reentry and Community Corrections, Racial Issues, and the Program and Training Committees; and

WHEREAS, he serves as an Auditor with the American Correctional Association (ACA), and in 2008, was elected to a two-year term as Treasurer of the ACA. He was elected in 2006 to serve on the ACA Nominating Committee, and in June 2004, he was elected to the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections of the American Correctional Association for the term of 2004-2008; and

WHEREAS, in 2007, he was appointed to the Executive Committee for the Commission. He is a long-standing member of the Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA), and in 2008 was selected

to serve as President of the Association. Additionally, he serves on the Board for Alcohol Services, Mississippi Prison Industries, the Mississippi Drug Court Advisory Committee, and is a former mentor with Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, other appointments consist of serving on the Council of Advisors for the College of Public Service at Jackson State University; and appointments by Governor Haley Barbour to the State Workforce Investment Board and the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision as Mississippi's representative. He is Chairman of the Mississippi Wireless Communications Commission and is a member of the Joint Terrorism Task Force. Former Chairman of the Victim Services Committee for ASCA, the Commissioner has also served ACA as the Chairman of Workforce Development and as Chairman of the Adult Corrections Standards Committee; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Epps' list of accomplishments and awards are numerous and include being named recipient of the 2012 Michael Francke Award as the outstanding National Director of Corrections by the Association of State Correctional Administrators; "Humanitarian of the Year" in 2007 by the Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections as well as "Professional of the Year" in 2000 and 2004; the 2007 Distinguished Alumni Award from the National Association for Equal Opportunity in Higher Education; one of the "50 Most Influential African-Americans in Mississippi" by BlackMississippi.com; and 2004 recipient of "The Distinguished Public Service Award" by the

University of Southern Mississippi, Department of Criminal Justice, for his contributions to the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, additional honors include: Army Commendations Medal; Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; National Defense Service Medal; NCO Professional Development Ribbon; Army Service Ribbon; Mississippi Medal of Efficiency; Mississippi War Medal; and the Mississippi Longevity Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster. Commissioner Epps was awarded the honorary title "Kentucky Colonel" in 2007 by Kentucky Governor Ernie Fletcher. On May 28, 2009, presented by the Mississippi House and Senate, Resolution No. 114, for dedication and outstanding service as the longest-serving Commissioner in the history of the Mississippi Department of Corrections; and

WHEREAS, Commissioner Epps' correctional/civilian affiliations include the American Correctional Association, Association of State Corrections Administrators, North American Association of Wardens and Superintendents, Southern States Correctional Association, Mississippi Association of Professionals in Corrections, the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation, the National Guard Association of Mississippi and the National Guard Association of the United States; and

WHEREAS, a native of Tchula, Mississippi, Commissioner Epps is a graduate of Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, with a Master of Arts Degree in Guidance and Counseling. He received his

Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi Valley State University. In 2012, the Association of State Correctional Administrators honored Christopher B. Epps, Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, as the outstanding Director of Corrections for 2011. Commissioner Epps is married to Catherlean Sanders Epps and they have two sons, Chris and Tracey; and

WHEREAS, Chris Epps' accomplishments in the field of Corrections, his outstanding service to the state and the local community, active participation in the Association of State Correctional Administrators, and his integrity, diplomacy and competence all illustrate the honor he has brought to the State of 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 and salute Mississippi Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps as the longest-serving Commissioner in the state's history on the occasion of his investiture as the 102nd President of the American Correctional Association (ACA) and the recipient of the 2012 Michael Francke Award as the outstanding National Director of Corrections by the Association of State Correctional Administrators.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this resolution be presented to Commissioner Epps and his family, forwarded to the Governor and

the Association of State Correctional Administrators, and made available to the Capitol Press Corps.

ADOPTED BY THE SENATE
February 13, 2013

PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

ADOPTED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
February 20, 2013

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES