
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: TUPELO PUBLIC HEARING ON THE STATE FLAG
DATE 10/23/00
CC: BOYD
COLE
MADER
SIMMONS

The Advisory Commission on the State Flag and the Coat of Arms held its first public hearing in Tupelo last Thursday, October 19th. Approximately 316 citizens attended the hearing, with 67 registering to comment.

Jack Reed opened the meeting by explaining that the commission was advisory in nature and was soliciting input from citizens. Two citizens spoke in favor of changing the traditional state flag, with the remaining speaking in favor of keeping the flag. Those in favor of keeping the flag repeatedly stated that the people should vote on the issue.

The comments were also very hostile and negative towards you and your creating the Advisory Commission. The general tone was that you have already decided that the flag should be changed and that you selected the Advisory Commission to ensure this change. It appeared as if a large portion of those attending the hearing do not understand that the Advisory Commission provides a formal mechanism for gathering information and opinions on this matter and that it has provided them the opportunity for more of a voice in this process than if the issue went straight to the Legislature.

Senator Chaney explained at the close of the hearing that the Advisory Commission is only advisory in nature and that the decision as to if the people vote on this matter rests with the Legislature.

I am going to share this information with William Winter and urge him to take steps to inform the public that the Advisory Commission is offering a greater number of people and organizations a voice in this process.

I have advised Rusty Barnes of Jim Giles' comments, particularly that "we will fight from here on out and there will be no peace."

Due to the hostile tones of the hearing towards this administration, I would like to request security for traveling to and from future hearings. Please advise.