



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

January 20, 2010

The Honorable Johnny Stringer
Chairman, House Appropriations Committee
Mississippi House of Representatives
Post Office Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215-1018

The Honorable Alan Nunnelee
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Committee
Mississippi Senate
Post Office Box 1018
Jackson, MS 39215-1018

Dear Chairman Stringer and Chairman Nunnelee:

As you are well aware, state and agency leaders are faced with a tremendous task in grappling with declining revenues as we prepare for Fiscal Year 2011. This alone will be a difficult challenge; however, before we can deal with next year's budget, action must first be taken to balance the current fiscal year 2010 budget.

Because revenue collections have continued to lag significantly, further budget cuts appear inevitable. Achieving the necessary savings to balance the FY 2010 budget will not be an easy task for any state agency, but it can be done effectively and in a manner that minimizes personnel cuts as much as possible. Toward this end, it is imperative that state agency directors be given the proper management tools that allow us that flexibility, including lump sum budgeting and freedom from State Personnel Board regulations. Failure to grant this flexibility will necessarily result in larger personnel cuts.

In a period where further deep cuts are expected for both this fiscal year and next, state agency heads should be granted maximum budget and personnel flexibility to effectively manage significantly reduced funding. Freedom from bureaucratic regulations should not be the exception, but the norm. Doing so allows state managers to identify areas of savings while minimizing layoffs. But let us be clear: this can only be achieved if agency directors are afforded true management flexibility.

It is clear that state government cannot operate as business as usual if we are to successfully deal with the revenue shortfall for the current and future fiscal years. As state government managers, we look forward to being key partners during these difficult budgetary times. We urge you to allow us to manage our agencies with flexibility as we deal with the current fiscal crisis.



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Eric Clark in blue ink.

Eric Clark, Executive Director
State Board for Community and Junior Colleges

Handwritten signature of Larry "Butch" Brown in black ink.

Larry "Butch" Brown, Executive Director
Department of Transportation

Handwritten signature of Steve Simpson in black ink.

Steve Simpson, Commissioner
Department of Public Safety

Handwritten signature of Kevin Upchurch in black ink.

Kevin Upchurch, Executive Director
Department of Finance and Administration

Handwritten signature of Gray Swoope in black ink.

Gray Swoope, Executive Director
Mississippi Development Authority

Handwritten signature of Butch McMillan in black ink.

Butch McMillan, Executive Director
Department of Rehabilitation Services

Handwritten signature of Ed Legrand in black ink.

Ed Legrand, Executive Director
Department of Mental Health

Handwritten signature of Don Thompson in black ink.

Don Thompson, Executive Director
Department of Human Services

Handwritten signature of Dr. Robert Robinson in black ink.

Dr. Robert Robinson, Executive Director
Division of Medicaid

Handwritten signature of Chris Epps in black ink.

Chris Epps, Commissioner
Department of Corrections

Handwritten signature of Trudy Fisher in black ink.

Trudy Fisher, Executive Director
Department of Environmental Quality

CC: Governor Haley Barbour
Lieutenant Governor Phil Bryant
Speaker of the House Billy McCoy
Members of the Mississippi Legislature