

March 30, 2001

TO THE MISSISSIPPI HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR HOUSE BILL 1471

I am returning House Bill Number 1471: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-101-27, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR THE CREATION OF AN AYERS SETTLEMENT FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO ESTABLISH A PUBLIC ENDOWMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF JACKSON STATE UNIVERSITY, ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY AND MISSISSIPPI VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY, AND TO REPEAL THE AYERS ENDOWMENT TRUST WITHIN THE WORKING CASH-STABILIZATION RESERVE FUND WHEN DEPOSITS TO THE AYERS SETTLEMENT FUND HAVE REACHED A CERTAIN AMOUNT; TO AMEND SECTION 27-103-203, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INTEREST EARNED ON THE WORKING CASH-STABILIZATION RESERVE FUND TO BE DEPOSITED INTO THE AYERS SETTLEMENT FUND, TO DELETE THE "HOUSE BILL 400" PROVISION WHICH REQUIRES THAT 50% OF THE UNENCUMBERED YEAR-END CASH BALANCE BE TRANSFERRED INTO THE EDUCATION ENHANCEMENT FUND, AND TO PROVIDE THAT ANY SUCH UNENCUMBERED YEAR-END CASH SHALL REMAIN IN THE STATE GENERAL FUND; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval and assign the following reason for my veto.

I reaffirm my strong commitment to full implementation of the terms of the Ayers Settlement Agreement and underscore my support for those provisions of House Bill No 1471 that address the funding of the Public Endowment Fund. However, there are elements of House Bill 1471 unrelated to the Ayers Settlement to which I have principal objection.

House Bill No. 1471 compromises education funding by deleting the "House Bill 400" provision that requires 50% of the unencumbered year-end cash balance to be transferred into the Education Enhancement Fund, leaving the unencumbered year-end cash in the State General Fund. We must ensure adequate funding for education. It is a choice of priorities and education must be a priority for the advancement of Mississippi.

If the language of this bill dealt only with the provisions of the implementation of the terms of the Ayers Settlement, I would sign House Bill 1471.

Respectfully submitted,

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR