

Received: from mercury.its.state.ms.us  
by governor.state.ms.us; Mon, 16 Apr 2001 11:53:25 -0500  
Received: from mx1.its.state.ms.us ([192.42.4.253]) by  
mercury.its.state.ms.us (Netscape Messaging Server 4.15) with  
SMTP id GBW9PH00.K6Q for <governor@governor.state.ms.us>; Mon,  
16 Apr 2001 11:56:05 -0500  
Received: from sunlold.its.state.ms.us (sunlold.its.state.ms.us [192.42.4.37])  
by mx1.its.state.ms.us (8.10.0/8.10.0) with ESMTP id f3GGt9X00658  
for <governor@governor.state.ms.us>; Mon, 16 Apr 2001 11:55:09 -0500 (CDT)  
Received: (from nobody@localhost)  
by sunlold.its.state.ms.us (8.10.0/8.10.0) id f3GGuXa29112;  
Mon, 16 Apr 2001 11:56:33 -0500 (CDT)  
Date: Mon, 16 Apr 2001 11:56:33 -0500 (CDT)  
Message-Id: <200104161656.f3GGuXa29112@sunlold.its.state.ms.us>  
To: governor@governor.state.ms.us  
From: RondaG72978@aol.com (Sharonda T. Gales)  
Subject: Comments to the Governor

Below is the result of your feedback form. It was submitted by  
Sharonda T. Gales (RondaG72978@aol.com) on Monday, April 16, 2001 at 11:56:33

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Issue: Racism in Mississippi

Street\_Address: 5845 Ridgewood Road, Apt. C-6

City: Jackson

State: MS

Zip\_Code: 39211

Message: Dear Mr. Musgrove:

The purpose of this letter is to discuss the events that took place on the Mississippi Gulf Coast at the Black Beach Weekend on April 6, 7, 8 2001. The mayor of Biloxi said before the event took place that he was going to make us wish that we had never come, and he succeeded. I hate to always be the one to play the "race card", but the events that took place this past weekend were perfect examples of racism. I say this because according to some of the residents of Biloxi that we spoke to, the same precautions have never been taken during any other event held on the coast. During the Fourth of July, people are allowed to park anywhere on the beachfront without the fear of their cars being towed. This past weekend, we were only allowed to park in a few designated areas. One lane on each side of the highway had been closed. I understand why this was done because last year, emergency vehicles had problems making it through the crowd. The Biloxi Police Department made the situation even worse by setting up a roadblock and checking licenses on this one lane highway. This was an obvious attempt to frustrate people. The police gave us no respect and felt that they could talk to us any kind of way. But when we responded back, we were arrested and/or our cars were towed and/or we received a nasty response in return. Access was blocked to pretty much everything on the beachfront. When I tried to get to the Beau Rivage to eat breakfast, the road leading to the casino had been blocked. I stopped to ask one of the officers how could I get down to the casino and had another officer come over and threatened me with a citation if I didn't move on. The other officer told us that a detour had been set up. And that if we went out on the interstate (Interstate 10) and took the first exit we could come back to the casino to eat. Once out on the interstate, the exit that we needed to take had been blocked along with pretty much every other exit. We had to travel 15 miles or more out of the way, just to get stuck back in traffic on highway 90. Throughout the whole weekend, we were being sent on detours that didn't exist and ended up going around in circles the whole weekend.

Time and time again, I hear Mississippians say how they want to change the image of the state and increase the number of tourists and businesses to the state. I guess that

is invitation was only directed towards white tourists and white owned businesses. This past weekend, you had African-American tourist from all over visiting the state and they were treated like dirt. I have never in my twenty-two years on this earth been treated so badly because of my race. I for one am ashamed to be a Mississippian if this is how African-Americans are going to be treated in this state. We were forced into a no win situation. We couldn't do anything, and we couldn't go anywhere. It was very frustrating and we can't be blamed for acting the way we acted considering the circumstances that we were placed in. There is talk about trying to move a football team to the coast, but if they couldn't handle the crowd this past weekend, how can they be expected to handle the crowd during football games? I have never been treated this badly in my home state. When you enter into Biloxi, there is a big sign welcoming you to Biloxi. I guess this sign as well only refers to white people, because we African-Americans that visited there this past weekend were certainly not welcomed. I am also writing a letter to the NAACP, recommending a boycott on the state of Mississippi. Because as a Mississippian, I want everyone to feel welcomed when they come to my home state. I feel that the only way to change things is to hit the state where it hurts, in the pockets.

Sincerely,

Sharonda Gales

submit: submit

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