



**DELBERT HOSEMANN**  
*Secretary of State*

MISSISSIPPI SECRETARY OF STATE  
CONSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES PUBLIC HEARING  
TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI  
AUGUST 9, 2011

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PRESIDING:

**DELBERT HOSEMANN**  
Mississippi Secretary of State  
401 Mississippi Street  
Jackson, Mississippi 39201

ALSO PRESENT:

LAURA WALKER  
MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

REPORTED BY: SHAUNA W. STANFORD, CSR  
CSR NO. 1380

1           SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank y'all for  
2 coming. It's good to see everyone this evening.  
3 I would like to welcome you to one of our nine  
4 public hearings on the initiatives, which will be  
5 on the November the 8th, 2011, general election  
6 ballot. They are -- and each of you will have  
7 received these -- the definition of person, voter  
8 ID, and eminent domain.

9           And this is the first time ever in  
10 Mississippi history that we have three  
11 constitutional initiatives. It's no easy task to  
12 get on the ballot in Mississippi. For each of  
13 these initiatives to be placed on the ballot,  
14 they had to obtain 89,285 signatures. All of  
15 these initiatives obtained over 100,000  
16 signatures from Mississippians. Those signatures  
17 had to be divided among the five congressional  
18 districts, so you had to get 17,857 from each  
19 district; and that was achieved by each of these  
20 initiatives.

21           In order for the initiative to pass, the  
22 legislature has structured it so that a majority  
23 of the total votes for that particular  
24 initiative, in addition to receiving more than 40  
25 percent of the actual votes cast in the election.

1           So this will be the gubernatorial election  
2           in November, so the governor, of course, will be  
3           at the top, lieutenant governor, secretary of  
4           state, and on down. In the process it is  
5           required to pass the initiative, the  
6           constitutional ballot initiatives will be at the  
7           bottom of the ballot, so you will need to vote  
8           not only for governor but all the way through.  
9           And we must achieve at least 40 percent of the  
10          total votes cast in the constitutional  
11          referendum.

12          Currently, what we are doing is the voter  
13          education process. That's what these are about.  
14          These particular pamphlets are designed by the  
15          secretary of state. They are required by the  
16          Mississippi legislature to be furnished to you.  
17          In each of these, you will see -- and we  
18          encourage you, if you haven't gotten yours, you  
19          can skip out and grab one -- you'll see the  
20          correspondence from me on how the process began;  
21          you will see a copy of the initiative  
22          themselves -- and I'll be reading those as we go  
23          to each of the initiatives -- then you will see a  
24          ballot title and a ballot summary.

25          Then there are two 300-word written

1 statements for and against each of the  
2 initiatives. So I would encourage to read those.  
3 The ones that were for and against were written  
4 by the proponents and opponents of each of the  
5 initiatives, not by the secretary of state.

6 We have two hearings left to go in  
7 Mississippi, so we have had six of these across  
8 the state. If you're not able to speak tonight  
9 or desire not to speak in public, we would still  
10 like to receive your input, and the way we do  
11 that is by written comments. If you will look on  
12 my website, you will see the first five are  
13 already on there verbatim of what was said at  
14 each one of the initiatives, beginning in  
15 Southaven, Mississippi.

16 As you will notice, these are all  
17 transcribed here, and each of the words will be  
18 transcribed and put on the Internet. In addition  
19 to those, we put all written comments on the  
20 Internet, and we have received over 100 of them  
21 from Mississippians for and against the various  
22 initiatives. All of those are put on the  
23 Internet.

24 And I believe that to be a very important  
25 part of the voter education process. It's

1 important that our Mississippians who may not  
2 hear you today -- may not even be able to read  
3 your words today -- that they also have the  
4 ability to see the written words and your  
5 positions.

6 The format for tonight is as follows -- and  
7 we will start -- we will discuss each initiative  
8 in the order in which they were filed with our  
9 agency, beginning with personhood, then voter  
10 identification, then eminent domain.

11 Between each of these we take a short break  
12 to allow for the proponents or opponents to move  
13 about, so we'll take a five-minute break between  
14 each of them. The first one will open with five  
15 minutes for and five minutes against each of the  
16 initiatives. The initiative sponsors have that  
17 time. We then begin with the public comment.

18 Those of you who have filed, Laura will be  
19 handing me the public statements of the ones that  
20 want to speak for and against. We try to rotate  
21 them. You're given two minutes to come and give  
22 your opinions. She will wave a card when you get  
23 to your two minutes so you can wrap up your  
24 comments.

25 Again, we accept written comments in full,

1 so we will go back and forth with anyone who  
2 wants to speak on each of these initiative.

3 Please remember when we're discussing these  
4 that these initiatives are already on the ballot,  
5 so you shouldn't waste your time discussing  
6 whether or not they should be on the ballot. We  
7 are going to vote on them as a society as  
8 Mississippi citizens.

9 Lastly, I would remember, particularly after  
10 what has happened this week to our servicemen and  
11 women, that there are people giving their lives  
12 today so that you can stand up in a public forum  
13 and discuss the issues of the day: Three very  
14 important constitutional issues. I encourage you  
15 to be civil with your fellow citizens in your  
16 language and both your conduct. Individuals may  
17 have different opinions concerning either one of  
18 these initiative. We respect their right to  
19 voice those opinions. That's what the  
20 Mississippi legislature has asked us to come and  
21 do tonight with five different ones of which  
22 we've extended to nine.

23 So with that, I will start with the  
24 definition of "person," which was the first one  
25 that was received by the secretary of state's

1 office. The initiative process, as I mentioned,  
2 was explained to you on the inside cover, and  
3 I'll read the constitutional initiative:

4 "Be it enacted by the people of the state of  
5 Mississippi: Article III of the constitution of  
6 the state of Mississippi is hereby amended by the  
7 addition of a new section to read: Section 33.  
8 Person defined. As used in Article III of the  
9 state constitution, The term 'person' or  
10 'persons' shall include every human being from  
11 the moment of fertilization, cloning, or the  
12 functional equivalent thereof."

13 That's what will be on the ballot. The  
14 style of the ballot is enclosed inside, and you  
15 can take a look at it. The ballot title:  
16 "Should the term 'person' be defined to include  
17 every human being from the moment of  
18 fertilization, cloning, or the equivalent  
19 thereof?" And the ballot summary will be on the  
20 ballot.

21 So we will start tonight with the first --  
22 our first speaker is Brad Prewitt, who will rise  
23 to speak for the personhood amendment. Brad?

24 MR. PREWITT: Thank you, Secretary  
25 Hosemann, and on behalf of yeson26.net, a

1 broad-based, mainstream coalition on behalf of  
2 personhood for the unborn, established at the  
3 earliest biological moment, either artificial or  
4 natural, I want to thank you for attending  
5 tonight.

6 I want to give special greetings to Les  
7 Riley who founded this petition drive and all my  
8 north Mississippi friends.

9 Personhood is an important initiative for  
10 the nation. Mississippi has the opportunity in  
11 November to set the standard for this country in  
12 a civil rights issue that is important for this  
13 age.

14 Personhood for the unborn, if not  
15 reestablished, will continue to marginalize and  
16 place the unborn in total life jeopardy.  
17 Fifty-three million unborn Americans have been  
18 lost since 1973. One-sixth of our population has  
19 been deprived of the American dream. Personhood  
20 in this state would bring new meaning to that.

21 Now, personhood is not a novel concept, my  
22 friends. First off, scientifically, it's  
23 unequivocal. The head of Mayo's genetics  
24 department said that "Science has a very simple  
25 conception of man: As soon as he has been

1 conceived, a man is a man."

2 Now, with that being stated, scripturally,  
3 where are we? Now, some have stated in previous  
4 hearings that this nation is not a Christian  
5 nation, but I would implore you, friends, that at  
6 least our state is one at this moment. In the  
7 constitution of this state, the very beginning of  
8 the preamble, the founders of this constitution,  
9 the framers, invoke Almighty God; and in that  
10 stead, to my friends, I will invoke Mighty God  
11 tonight.

12 And I will tell you that in Genesis God  
13 said, "Let us make man in our image," and that  
14 imports ultimate significance to every creation  
15 in the womb; and that is all the unborn have that  
16 creation significance.

17 And so, my friends, we take that and look in  
18 Psalm 139:16, and we see that God saw the  
19 unformed substance of man -- in this case, David  
20 -- and that is significant to us. And so, my  
21 friends, you know, we implore -- infer that God  
22 has meaning here.

23 George Washington himself, our founder of  
24 this country, said, "It is impossible to rightly  
25 govern a nation without God and the Bible."

1 Furthermore, Ronald Reagan even more recently had  
2 a personhood proclamation in 1988 where he said  
3 "The well-being and future of our country demand  
4 that protection of the innocents must be  
5 guaranteed and the personhood of the unborn must  
6 be declared and defended throughout our land."

7 Friends, this is not a novel concept. Even  
8 our Mississippi statutes recognize in criminal  
9 law that the unborn, at the moment of conception,  
10 possess personhood status; therefore, committing  
11 a crime against a pregnant mother constitutes two  
12 crimes. So this is not a novel concept, friends.

13 Now, Roe v. Wade ignored the facts of life,  
14 ignored Biblical founders, scientific precepts,  
15 and they went their own way; but even in going  
16 their own way, they said to Ms. Weddington, the  
17 lawyer, said, "If this suggestion of personhood  
18 is established, the appellate's case collapses,  
19 for the fetus's right to life would then be  
20 guaranteed specifically by the amendment." So  
21 they knew that equal protection should and could  
22 attach the infant in that case.

23 Now, my friends, what does personhood not  
24 do? Well, you'll hear a lot of Chicken Little,  
25 "Sky is falling" tonight. Well, it's not going

1 to cut out contraception. Now, it will cut out  
2 things that abort children in the womb: Plan B,  
3 all those different abortive agents.

4 It will not stand in the way of the life of  
5 a mother being protected in the case of a  
6 pregnancy that is harmful. Standards of  
7 self-defense continue to apply.

8 This does not force a woman as secondary  
9 status to the unborn. Surely not. It does not  
10 confine medical research to the dark ages. There  
11 are more responsible ways to do this.

12 It does not stop IVF from being a blessing  
13 to parents like myself and my wife, who had two  
14 children by way of this great grace of God  
15 himself. It does not stop it. It simply says  
16 you cannot destroy the embryos; you cannot  
17 destroy them for medical research purposes.

18 It will not confine miscarriages to the  
19 prosecutorial process. That didn't happen before  
20 abortion.

21 Friends, rape and incest, that's a tough  
22 one. You will hear tonight, surely, some cases.  
23 It is tragic. We should show grace to those  
24 people, just like we show grace to the unborn,  
25 but, friends, it is a life. It is a person. You

1 must protect a person. There are options:  
2 Adoption, orphanages. There are other options  
3 out there. So, friends, let's dismiss all this  
4 talk of why we can't get to the unborn.

5 Friends, there is a tragic black market of  
6 tissue cells out there. Let me read you this:  
7 "Find out how you can turn your patient's  
8 decision into something wonderful. Fresh fetal  
9 tissue harvested and shipped to your  
10 specifications where and when you need it."

11 This is out there, friends. This is going  
12 on in America. This is going on in America.  
13 Wake up, Mississippi. You've got to engage on  
14 this issue. We have the opportunity to finally  
15 raise the blinds on this, get this out in the  
16 open. This is a travesty. Any other situation,  
17 this will be treated as the worst atrocity, the  
18 worst war crime, in the history of the world.  
19 Wake up, friends. Let's vote "yes" on 26 in  
20 November.

21 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Reverend Vincent  
22 Lachina will now rise for five minutes to speak  
23 against the personhood amendment.

24 REVEREND LACHINA: Thank you, Secretary  
25 Hosemann.

1           My name is the Reverend Vincent Lachina, and  
2 I am an ordained Southern Baptist minister with  
3 47 years of service to the family of God; and I  
4 wish to state quite clearly that I am both an  
5 evangelical Christian and I am committed to a  
6 woman's right to her own reproductive choice.

7           I am both a father and a grandfather, and I  
8 consider myself both pro-choice and pro-life, and  
9 I see no conflict in those two convictions.

10          While I may not live in Mississippi currently, I  
11 grew up in Jackson and have a Mississippi  
12 heritage, and it was there that I began my  
13 calling in ministry 47 years ago.

14          I'm here this evening to speak in opposition  
15 to Initiative 26. Though I am here as a  
16 minister, this initiative is not a spiritual  
17 matter, but rather a purely political move to  
18 further limit a woman's right to control her own  
19 choices.

20          During the past few decades the unholy  
21 alliance between faith and politics has done  
22 great harm to the most vulnerable of God's  
23 children. In a political climate in which  
24 citizens are continually out for less government  
25 intrusion into their daily lives, misguided ideas

1       like Initiative 26 create an even wider opening  
2       for governments to invade your families. We are  
3       permitting the government to make decisions that  
4       are better placed in the hands of a woman, who  
5       should have the right to make decisions about her  
6       own life and her own health, with the help of her  
7       doctor, her family, and her God without the  
8       interference of either the government or the  
9       church.

10       Our Christian faith follows the teachings of  
11       Jesus Christ who created a new and elevated role  
12       for women in the world. Women were moved from  
13       being mere property to a place of recognition as  
14       man's coequal and partner.

15       The Apostle Paul said, "In Christ, there is  
16       no east or west, no male or female." For  
17       centuries, women have been allowed to be their  
18       own moral agents, to make their own decisions  
19       about life -- where to go to school, what to  
20       study, whom to date and eventually marry, whether  
21       to be a mother or not, to work or not, what to  
22       feed their families, and much, much more.

23       Initiatives like this one would say to women  
24       in the state of Mississippi, "You are not capable  
25       of making your own decisions, so we're going to

1       make those for you."

2           I was blessed to be a part of a family where  
3       strong spiritual women were my role models. My  
4       mother and three sisters were all strong-willed  
5       and women of great accomplishment. But not every  
6       home is so fortunate. Many women in this state  
7       are all too often victims of unspeakable acts:  
8       Domestic violence, sexual abuse, incest, and  
9       rape. If such misguided laws as this are  
10      enacted, we -- that's you and I -- would be  
11      guilty of inflicting a new unspeakable act on  
12      women who are already victims once and would have  
13      to endure the horror, pain, and shame all over  
14      again.

15          The writers and funders of this initiative  
16      have couched this as an issue of personhood, but  
17      no one is fooled by those kinds of tactics. This  
18      is an effort to eliminate a woman's ability to  
19      terminate a pregnancy, regardless of her  
20      situation.

21          This law and any like it will not stop women  
22      who are desperate to end a pregnancy from doing  
23      so. We will instead return to the days of women  
24      who self-abort with knitting needles or coat  
25      hangers, of unscrupulous practitioners leaving

1 women permanently scarred -- or worse, dead --  
2 and thousands of horror stories that make us all  
3 both sad and sick.

4 Wise men and women know that there are two  
5 ways to effectively reduce both the need and the  
6 frequency of abortion. First, accurate and  
7 comprehensive education about human sexuality  
8 taught at home, in schools, and in churches; and,  
9 second, the availability of preventive methods  
10 for both women and men.

11 If society wants to get serious about the  
12 issue of unplanned pregnancies, we will direct  
13 our efforts toward these proven solutions.  
14 Spending time attempting to pass intrusive laws  
15 like Initiative 26 is a waste of our time,  
16 energy, and money and will only lead us down a  
17 dark path.

18 Our society is not composed of one group or  
19 one denomination or even one religion. We are a  
20 tapestry of many faiths and many faithful  
21 beliefs. Each of us is struggling to live out  
22 our faith in a complex and sometimes unfriendly  
23 world. One view cannot and must not be the only  
24 basis for guiding our world.

25 Let me close with this verse from the Gospel

1 of Matthew: "Many will say to me in that day,  
2 Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied and asked in  
3 Thy name and in Thy name have cast out devils and  
4 in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then  
5 will I profess unto them, I never knew you.  
6 Depart from me you that work iniquity."

7 And I prayerfully ask that you speak up for  
8 all the women and reject Initiative 26.

9 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Reverend.

10 We now move to the public forum, and I will  
11 call you by name; and I would ask that you please  
12 come up. If we need to move this just a little  
13 bit where you can get behind it and address the  
14 audience, there's more of them out there than it  
15 is up here.

16 So I would ask that you speak to your fellow  
17 citizens, and we will start with my friend Les  
18 Riley. He's going to speak for Initiative 26,  
19 and he's recognized for two minutes.

20 MR. RILEY: I actually thought I would  
21 have something to put my notes on, but pardon me.

22 Jesus was asked once, "Master, what is the  
23 greatest commandment?"

24 He gave two statements that were very  
25 similar. He said, "You shall love the Lord your

1 God, and you shall love your neighbor as  
2 yourself."

3 Personhood is simply an effort to enact that  
4 in our law system. I'd like to not only tell you  
5 why you should vote for Amendment 26, but I would  
6 like to very quickly lay the groundwork by  
7 telling you what motivated my family and many  
8 here to get involved in it, because we're going  
9 to hear a lot about equality, a lot about  
10 oppressing women, a lot about all these different  
11 motivations.

12 I'm going to tell you what motivated us to  
13 get involved in this. We love God because He  
14 first loved us, His image, and because he loves  
15 us, we love what He loves and hate what He hates.  
16 And we, particularly, because He loves us, the  
17 second like unto it, we love our neighbors. We  
18 love children. We love children, regardless of  
19 their size, their location, their development  
20 status, their method of reproduction, their race,  
21 whether or not their parent was a criminal; and  
22 because of that, not only do we fight for this,  
23 but many of us has adopted and fostered children.

24 We love the women who are harmed by abortion  
25 like Anne Reed, who will speak later tonight,

1       whose life was ruined for 20 years before she  
2       found faith and forgiveness in Christ.

3             Like the lady I met yesterday morning, the  
4       young mother who said, "I don't want to abort,  
5       but my boyfriend is making me." Some choice.  
6       Some pro-woman. We allow men to exploit women.

7             We even love our enemies. I pray for you  
8       daily that many of you who are here angered me,  
9       who don't agree with me, like Beverly McMillan,  
10      who opened the first abortion clinic in  
11      Mississippi and now a pro-life Christian; like  
12      Norma McCorvey, who was the Jane Roe of Roe v.  
13      Wade and said she was exploited and used, and now  
14      she's a pro-life Christian.

15            We are motivated by love. And, lastly, we  
16      love our state and our nation; and we know that  
17      not only God, but the bar of history will judge  
18      us based on how we treat the least of these and  
19      how we speak for those who can't speak for  
20      themselves. Please vote "yes" on 26.

21            SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Mr. Riley.

22            Cristen Hemmins? Cristen? Cristen is  
23      rising to speak against Initiative 26. You're  
24      recognized. How are you, Cristen? Good to see  
25      you again.

1 MS. HEMMINS: My name is Cristen Hemmins.  
2 I was born and raised in Mississippi, and I'm  
3 here to speak in opposition to Amendment 26.  
4 These are my three children. I have children,  
5 too, and I love children, too; and they would not  
6 exist if Amendment 26 had been in place 20 years  
7 ago.

8 When I was 20 years old, I was abducted,  
9 raped, and shot twice, as I escaped, by two men  
10 on a weekend carjacking spree in Jackson. They  
11 shot me twice in the back as I ran away from  
12 them; and when I ran into a gas station, they  
13 fired multiple times into the building where I  
14 crouched behind the counter. I was in the  
15 hospital for three weeks total, but made a  
16 complete recovery.

17 If I had become pregnant after this  
18 horrifying event, it should have been my choice  
19 whether to bear that child or not. If something  
20 like Initiative 26 had been in place, my options  
21 would have been shut down and my life totally  
22 altered. I would have been forced to bear a  
23 child I did not want born of pain, fear, and  
24 profound hatred.

25 How is that a good thing for anyone, and why

1 would you wish that on anyone? This choice, as  
2 the victim in this situation, should not be the  
3 government's or my fellow Mississippians to make.  
4 It should be mine and mine alone.

5 To people who think this initiative sounds  
6 good, I ask you to really think through the  
7 implications of declaring a fertilized egg a  
8 person. Passing this initiative may very well  
9 reach right into your medicine cabinet and take  
10 away your simple right to birth control.

11 Consider ectopic pregnancies, embryos with  
12 genetic anomalies, IVF issues. These are all  
13 painful personal decisions that I would never  
14 dare make for a woman other than myself, and yet  
15 this initiative does just that: Injects the hand  
16 of government into all Mississippi women's lives  
17 at arguably their most vulnerable and difficult  
18 time.

19 You may hear my story and think that's never  
20 going to happen to me. I am a worst-case  
21 scenario. All Mississippi women simply deserve  
22 the right to make their own decisions about their  
23 reproduction under good circumstances and bad.  
24 To think they don't deserve this is to say that  
25 they are not smart enough to make those decisions

1 on their own.

2 Thank you.

3 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.

4 Hemmins.

5 Robert Shearin. Mr. Shearin is from  
6 Southaven, Mississippi, and he rises to speak for  
7 the personhood amendment.

8 DR. SHEARIN: My name is Bob Shearin. I'm  
9 a proud citizen of Mississippi and a physician  
10 and a father, and I support Initiative 26. I'm  
11 going to speak fast, because I have a lot to say.  
12 There's so much more to say.

13 A few words from science and law on life and  
14 personhood. Professor Micheline Matthews-Roth of  
15 Harvard Medical School testified, "It is  
16 incorrect to say that biological data cannot be  
17 decisive. It is scientifically correct to say  
18 that an individual human life begins at  
19 conception."

20 Berkeley law professor William Prosser wrote  
21 in the 1950s, "Medical authority has long  
22 recognized that an unborn child is in existence  
23 from the moment of conception. All writers agree  
24 that the unborn child in the path of an  
25 automobile is as much a person as its mother and

1 should be equally protected under the law."

2 Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas  
3 wrote in 1972 in a different case, "The ordinary  
4 corporation is a person for purposes of the  
5 adjudicatory process, so it should be as respects  
6 valleys, alpine meadows, rivers, lakes, or even  
7 air. With all respect, the problem is to make  
8 certain that the inanimate objects have spokesmen  
9 before they are destroyed."

10 Unfortunately, Justice Douglas, who wanted  
11 to confer personhood on air, did not hold  
12 pre-born babies in such high regard and voted  
13 just eight months later in Roe v. Wade to exclude  
14 pre-born babies from the protection of  
15 personhood.

16 A few examples of the results of current  
17 public policy. Removing the protections of  
18 personhood from unborn children in America is  
19 based on legal fantasy, and it's led us to the  
20 destruction of well over 50 million pre-born  
21 children so far.

22 ABC's 20/20 and others have reported on the  
23 ghoulish trade in parts of aborted babies. Eyes  
24 are sold for 50- to \$75; brains, \$999 if intact,  
25 one-third less if they are, quote, fragmented.

1 By the way, did you know that if you even  
2 disturb a bald eagle egg or nest, you may be  
3 fined up to \$250,000 and go to prison?

4 The instruction that Matthew gives us in  
5 18:10 is quite clear: "See that you do not  
6 despise one of these little ones."

7 It was God who gave us the common sense to  
8 understand that since life begins -- human  
9 life -- begins at conception, babies should be  
10 protected from that moment on.

11 Please vote for Initiative 26.

12 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you.

13 Christen Boytan. Christen is from Oxford,  
14 Mississippi, and she rises for two minutes to  
15 speak against the personhood amendment.

16 MS. BOYTAN: I'm not going to get too  
17 close to this microphone, because I have a big  
18 voice and I don't want to blow everybody's  
19 eardrums out.

20 My name is Christen Boytan, and I'm from  
21 Oxford. I was formerly Private Boytan, then  
22 Sergeant Boytan, then lieutenant, then Captain  
23 Boytan. I spent eight years on active duty in  
24 the United States Army as an intelligence  
25 officer, and three and a half years of that I

1 spent in Iraq and Afghanistan.

2 So I'm not here to talk about abortion. I'm  
3 here to talk about two lessons that I learned as  
4 an Army officer that I carry with me to this day:  
5 How to be a responsible steward of our public  
6 resources and who we are as a people.

7 As an Army officer, I was responsible for  
8 managing millions of dollars of Army equipment  
9 that was paid for with your tax dollars, and I  
10 took that responsibility very, very seriously,  
11 which is why this amendment hits a nerve with me.

12 It will cost the state of Mississippi  
13 millions of dollars to defend this through  
14 dozens, maybe even hundreds, of court cases while  
15 we figure out exactly what those exceptions are  
16 and exactly what it does to reproductive  
17 technology and exactly what it does to taxes and  
18 all these things that most people have not  
19 thought about when it comes to this amendment,  
20 and that will cost this state so much money at a  
21 time when we are laying off teachers and then  
22 slashing the salaries of policemen.

23 We cannot afford this. And the reason that  
24 we can't afford this is because, at the end of  
25 the day, after we spent all this money and all

1 this energy on this amendment in court, it is  
2 doomed to fail. It will fail. Ultimately, it  
3 will fail, and here's why -- there's a very  
4 simple reason -- outside all the legal arguments  
5 and outside all the court cases, it will fail  
6 because it is not who we are.

7 I spent three and a half years in countries  
8 where I could be shot on sight for walking  
9 outside dressed the way that I am right now for  
10 religious reasons, but not even Muslim countries  
11 send women to prison for miscarrying; not even  
12 Muslim countries exclude necessity as an  
13 exception for abortion; not even Muslim countries  
14 do that. We should stop behaving like a  
15 third-world country. We are not a third-world  
16 country. This is not who we are.

17 Thank you. Please vote no to Amendment 26.

18 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.  
19 Boytan.

20 Caleb Frederick from New Albany,  
21 Mississippi. He is recognized for two minutes to  
22 speak for the personhood amendment.

23 MR. FREDERICK: Thank you.

24 My name is Caleb Frederick. I was raised in  
25 Pontotoc, Mississippi. I'm recently married at

1       23. Two years ago I talked to over 10,000 people  
2       in Mississippi about abortion and about Jesus  
3       Christ, and the reason I got out there on the  
4       street and tried to get this on the ballot was  
5       not for babies' rights. It was not for  
6       individual's rights. It was not because America  
7       is a free country. It is not because we are a  
8       country that fears God. It is not because we are  
9       good people. It is not because thousands of  
10      women wake up in the middle of the night and  
11      cannot forgive themselves for what they did.

12           It is because Jesus Christ reigns in heaven  
13      and in earth, and He will have all the glory from  
14      every human being that He has created.

15           Men and women have sex. When they have sex,  
16      God is the one that gives the life, and every  
17      life is His; and He demands that we repent and we  
18      turn to Him. His scripture is sufficient, and He  
19      says that He is worthy. And I want Mississippi  
20      and every individual to glorify Him. And that's  
21      why our laws need to protect babies and our women  
22      need to be helped.

23           Thank you.

24           SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Frederick.

25           Robin Rasmussen from Holly Springs,

1 Mississippi. Robin is recognized for two minutes  
2 to speak against the personhood initiative.

3 MS. RASMUSSEN: Thank you.

4 My name is Robin Rasmussen, Robin Hughes  
5 Rasmussen, and I want to thank all of the  
6 gentlemen who stood up today. I noticed it's all  
7 you guys that are in favor of this amendment.

8 And to the young man that just spoke, thank  
9 you for caring about me, but I'm a grown woman.

10 I can make my own decisions, and I can live with  
11 my own decisions; and I don't need the government  
12 telling me what my decisions should be.

13 And to the gentleman that's motivated out of  
14 love, thank you. I appreciate that. I do  
15 appreciate that, and I'm glad that you care about  
16 me. I'm glad that you care about me as another  
17 human being, but that care doesn't give you the  
18 right to tell me what I get to do with my body.

19 Mr. Prewitt, thank you, but Plan B don't  
20 work on pregnant women. It's birth control.  
21 It's not abortion.

22 So when we sit here and we talk about laws,  
23 creating laws that dictate when life begins or  
24 when life doesn't begin, that's not your place,  
25 that's not my place, that's not God's place. My

1 relationship with God is my relationship with  
2 God, not yours, and you don't get to make those  
3 decisions for me ever.

4 Thank you.

5 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.  
6 Rasmussen.

7 Brother Steve Cohea from Blue Mountain,  
8 Mississippi, to speak for the initiative.

9 REVEREND COHEA: Thank you.

10 My name is Steve Cohea. I'm the pastor of  
11 First Baptist Church here in Pontotoc -- over  
12 here in Pontotoc County.

13 And ma'am, you have the right, but that baby  
14 in your womb has no rights if you kill it. That  
15 baby has no rights if you kill it.

16 People have sex. God creates life. And for  
17 the lady that was raped, I have mercy for you.  
18 God has mercy for you. I'm sorry that you were  
19 raped.

20 MR. HEMMINS: Would have been nice if you  
21 had that when she was being raped.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: No. We --

23 REVEREND COHEA: Sir, no one interrupted  
24 y'all. Please don't interrupt me.

25 When God created that baby, it was for a

1 purpose, and it wasn't to die. As long as we in  
2 this nation look the other way and have made  
3 wrong right and right wrong, this nation will go  
4 the way of the devil.

5 I preach it every Sunday, and, sir, I'm  
6 appalled that you're a Southern Baptist preacher;  
7 and you will stand before an Almighty God that  
8 says life belongs to Him, not to any one of us.  
9 Life belongs to God.

10 Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and  
11 the life." We have no right to kill unborn  
12 babies, but it's okay to go around and say, "It's  
13 my body." That body belongs to God. He created  
14 you. And if we will continue to do what we're  
15 doing in this nation, God have mercy on us.

16 I don't understand why you think that just  
17 because you conceive a child that you have the  
18 right to kill that child when that child has the  
19 rights that you have. That child has the same  
20 rights that you have.

21 In the Bible there was a young lady one time  
22 that went -- her name was Mary -- went to her  
23 cousin Elizabeth, and when Mary walked into the  
24 room, the baby that was in Elizabeth leaped with  
25 joy. If that wasn't life, how did the baby leap

1 for joy? Why did the baby leap for joy? Because  
2 God was in his presence.

3 Thank you.

4 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you.

5 Forrest Jenkins. Forrest Jenkins, please,  
6 from Oxford, Mississippi. Ms. Jenkins rises to  
7 speak against the personhood amendment.

8 MS. JENKINS: I'm Forrest Jenkins. I live  
9 in Oxford, Mississippi, currently, and I'm  
10 originally from Pontotoc. That's where I grew  
11 up.

12 So this initiative intends to grant legal  
13 due process rights to the unborn and refers to --  
14 I heard Mr. Prewitt, in fact, refer to -- the  
15 legislature's duty to invent those necessary  
16 processes as tweaking, so I would like to go  
17 through a few matters that that tweaking would  
18 entail.

19 Pregnancy is defined by the American College  
20 of Obstetricians and Gynecologists as beginning  
21 at the time that the embryo implants into the  
22 woman's uterus, not at the moment that the egg is  
23 fertilized. So pregnancy prevention currently  
24 includes methods that prevent implantation.  
25 Should those methods of birth control, which

1 include the IUD, the ring, the patch, various  
2 forms of birth control pills be illegal because  
3 they would deprive a person of the opportunity to  
4 attach to a woman's body?

5 And, if so, should doctors and pharmacists  
6 be compelled to turn over their medical records  
7 of women who have used or are currently using now  
8 illegal forms of birth control?

9 Up to 25 percent of all pregnancies end in  
10 the form of miscarriage. Since now a person, who  
11 is like a grown adult person, has passed, how  
12 should law enforcement investigate and punish  
13 women's behavior that may have led to the  
14 miscarriage?

15 Should a miscarriage in a cigarette smoking  
16 woman or woman who lives with a smoker be  
17 considered gross negligence or manslaughter? In  
18 cases where the mother's life is threatened, does  
19 the embryo have a right to be represented by an  
20 attorney before its life is terminated? And by  
21 what court process must a woman obtain permission  
22 for her doctors to provide her life-saving care  
23 by terminating a pregnancy?

24 In the case of IVF embryos, is it a  
25 violation of the embryo's due process rights to

1 store it outside the body as sometimes happens?  
2 And if so, must a woman who wishes to use the IVF  
3 process be forced to attempt to implant all  
4 viable embryos at once?

5 If a woman is pregnant with multiples and  
6 any number of them threaten the life or lives of  
7 any other one, should she file the document in  
8 court requesting to terminate any of them, or  
9 should the embryos each have their own separate  
10 documentation for the court process?

11 Make no mistake: Answering these questions  
12 is complicated; it's not a simple matter. Every  
13 investigation, every court filing, every  
14 incarceration, plus the legislature's time in  
15 inventing these processes that do not currently  
16 exist is going to be paid for by Mississippi  
17 taxpayers.

18 To say that it's as simple as tweaking this  
19 amendment is to either lie or be profoundly  
20 naive. This initiative will result in extreme  
21 invasions into women's personal lives, their  
22 medical care, their relationship with their  
23 doctors, pharmacists, and ultimately their  
24 husbands and their sexual partners.

25 I urge you to vote against the personhood

1 initiative in November. This is not about the  
2 lives of children. If it was, we would do better  
3 than having the highest mortality rate in the  
4 nation. It's about reducing women to a set of  
5 reproductive organs. It's about thinking of  
6 pregnancy and childbirth and children, not as  
7 gifts, but as a natural form of punishment  
8 against women for sexual behavior.

9 If this passes in November, it will mean  
10 that this state explicitly defines freedom for  
11 women differently from the way that it defines  
12 freedom for men, and that should be unacceptable  
13 in the United States of America.

14 Thank you.

15 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.  
16 Jenkins.

17 Patrick Vaughn. Patrick Vaughn from Tupelo,  
18 Mississippi, to speak for the personhood  
19 initiative.

20 You're recognized for two minutes,  
21 Mr. Vaughn.

22 MR. VAUGHN: Thank you.

23 I'm Patrick Vaughn. I am an attorney here  
24 in Tupelo, Mississippi. I wish to speak in favor  
25 of Proposition 26, and I'll attempt not to abuse

1 you by running way over.

2 One of the questions that has risen in the  
3 public is the somewhat awkward language regarding  
4 cloning, and the reason that language is in the  
5 proposition is that, currently, as cloning is  
6 practiced in the United States, human cloning --  
7 if you recall back when George Bush was debating  
8 over the federal funding of human cloning and  
9 they allowed a certain stem cell line to be  
10 worked on that -- the requirement is that you not  
11 allow -- that you can clone, but you have to kill  
12 the product and harvest whatever parts that you  
13 are experimenting on.

14 And the purpose of this is to end that  
15 practice so that there would not be cloning for  
16 scientific experimentation or for the production  
17 and harvesting of body parts. That is going on  
18 at the Mississippi Medical -- Mississippi Medical  
19 Center right now, and we need to end that.

20 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
21 Mr. Vaughn.

22 Jesse Wright from Oxford. Jesse is  
23 recognized to speak against the personhood  
24 initiative.

25 MR. WRIGHT: Hello. All right. Life,

1       like death, is difficult to define. Is it the  
2       presence of a pulse? Is it brain activity? Is  
3       it viability, the ability to live on one's own  
4       with or without artificial aid?

5           Each of us could answer these questions, and  
6       each answer is different, but none would be  
7       wrong. There is no clear consensus of when life  
8       begins or ends or, even more vaguely, when one  
9       becomes a person.

10          Supporters of Initiative 26 would have you  
11       believe this is cut and dried, but you know it's  
12       anything but; and this debate tonight proves  
13       that, if nothing else.

14          I don't want to think about what I would do  
15       if a loved one needed an abortion, but I believe  
16       that decision should be made by the loved one and  
17       her family. These are private things, hard  
18       things, and they wouldn't be made any easier by  
19       government interference.

20          It is not your business what I should do  
21       with my body provided I don't do anything to hurt  
22       you, and neither is it my business what you do  
23       with yours. We have a right to make individual  
24       decisions.

25          We enjoy rights that respect our

1 individuality, because we are different. We  
2 prize our differences, and so we should continue  
3 to respect the rights that grant us those  
4 differences.

5 Many of the supporters tonight especially  
6 cite their faith as the basis for their support.  
7 I have no problem with their beliefs. If they  
8 believe their faith forbids them from practicing  
9 abortion, so be it. We should respect personal  
10 beliefs, either minority or majority views,  
11 popular or unpopular; however, should their  
12 problem with my beliefs pass into law, it would  
13 end a safe, simple medical procedure for  
14 everybody, regardless of what anyone believes.

15 We live in a nation that values personal  
16 choice, personal responsibility, personal  
17 liberty, so oppose Initiative 26 so we can keep  
18 it that way.

19 Thank you.

20 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Mr.  
21 Wright.

22 Mr. Grant Sowell. Grant Sowell.  
23 Mr. Sowell, you're recognized from Tupelo,  
24 Mississippi, to speak for the amendment.

25 MR. SOWELL: Hello. I'm Grant Sowell.

1 I'm from Tupelo. I'm a youth pastor.

2 Today 4,000 Americans died. We didn't hear  
3 a news story on it. You heard about the 31 men  
4 who gave their life, and rightly so. They should  
5 be honored. They should be recognized. They  
6 should be remembered. But 4,000 Americans died  
7 who didn't volunteer to serve our country. They  
8 had no choice in the matter. They had no say.  
9 They did not have the right to life. They did  
10 not have the opportunity to choose life, liberty,  
11 and the pursuit of happiness, to fulfill the  
12 American dream, to consider what's out there for  
13 them. Their lives was taken.

14 I could talk about med school, city policy,  
15 how thousands of dollars -- not thousands --  
16 millions, if not billions, of dollars are going  
17 into other countries and how that's ridiculous.  
18 I could talk about Planned Parenthood and how  
19 it's a horrendous scam and atrocity and how it  
20 targets minorities and how it's just all about  
21 the money. And I could talk about the women who,  
22 for whatever reason, they don't want to keep  
23 their child, but what I want to talk about is  
24 Mississippi; and I want to talk about the  
25 opportunity that we have to vote yes.

1           We are considered the number one  
2 conservative state in the nation. What does that  
3 mean? I think it means that we are a state in  
4 the Bible Belt. We love God. We care about our  
5 neighbors. We care about one another, and we  
6 respect people.

7           And for a woman to say you cannot tell me  
8 what to do with my body -- if you want to get a  
9 nose job or some other kind of job or whatever,  
10 that's your business, but when you're talking  
11 about taking that life, for whatever reason, I  
12 think that life should be defended by our  
13 Mississippi Constitution. I think that life  
14 defends honor.

15          I'm not a big government guy. I'm a limited  
16 government guy, and I think the government does  
17 have a limited role; and I think it is to protect  
18 life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And  
19 I think we should consider that.

20          And that's all I have to say. Vote yes for  
21 Personhood 26.

22          SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Joseph Parker.  
23 Joseph Parker from Tupelo, Mississippi.  
24 Mr. Parker? He is recognized to speak for the  
25 personhood initiative.

1           REVEREND PARKER: I'm here to encourage  
2 you to vote yes on Amendment 26 in November.  
3 I've been a pastor for most of the last 35 years,  
4 and one of the goals that I have as a pastor is  
5 to help people understand what it means to fear  
6 God.

7           Basically, that means that we look to the  
8 Word of God for a guide for everything we do and  
9 everything we say. Amongst other things, the  
10 Word of God clearly tell us thou shalt not kill.

11          The number one cause of death in the black  
12 community is abortion. Nothing kills more of our  
13 ethnic group than abortion. Tragically, it's  
14 been marketed to the black community so  
15 extensively that, again, we're at a point as an  
16 ethnic group that we kill more of our children  
17 than we allow to be born, and that's easily  
18 documented both in Mississippi, in New York, and  
19 most any state, we find it to be true.

20          The need is for us to understand that to  
21 fear God is to do things the right way and the  
22 way that's in everyone's best interest. Not long  
23 ago my wife, who is a co-pastor of the church  
24 that we pastor, she was doing a children's  
25 message with the children. And she was talking

1 to the children. She wasn't talking about  
2 abortion. She was talking about what are you  
3 thankful for, and some of them said the usual  
4 things: "I'm thankful for my family, thankful  
5 for my mom, thankful for my home," but two of the  
6 children, I think around eight and nine, both  
7 said, "I'm thankful that my mother didn't abort  
8 me."

9 What a tragedy it is that we live in a  
10 society where children recognize that grown  
11 people kill children and they let some children  
12 live. How tragic it is to think that we would  
13 have a society where children wonder about that,  
14 a brother or sister that isn't because Mom or Dad  
15 made the decision to take their sibling's life.

16 So just in a nutshell, I would say it's  
17 important that we as Mississippi use the  
18 opportunity God has given us to end this tragedy.  
19 Again, not just for the sake of the black  
20 community, for the sake of our whole culture,  
21 because we're destroying our children, and that's  
22 not good for anybody.

23 Thank you.

24 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
25 Mr. Parker.

1 Philip Morris. Philip, you're recognized  
2 for -- from New Albany, Mississippi, and you are  
3 recognized for two minutes to speak for the  
4 initiative.

5 MR. MORRIS: Thank you. My name is Philip  
6 Morris. I'm from New Albany.

7 Just a few comments to add to some of the  
8 things people have already said and not to engage  
9 in a debate, but the issue of thinking of when  
10 the issue of life begins, Paul says in Acts 17,  
11 "It is God who gives to all life and breath and  
12 all things."

13 I have a quote -- I didn't come prepared  
14 really to speak here, but a quote from a medical  
15 research doctor from UCLA. He said, "Every  
16 embryologist in the world knows that life begins  
17 at fertilization. Whatever kind of life that is,  
18 there is a beginning point. That point is  
19 fertilization."

20 I have one quote as well. I don't have it  
21 -- I've got it paraphrased from a Princeton  
22 bioethicist. He said, "As we sit together and  
23 talk here in this room, we are adults. At one  
24 time earlier in our life, we were adolescents.  
25 At one time earlier before that, we were infants.

1 Before that, we were a fetus; and before that,  
2 you were an embryo. It is a life stage that  
3 every human being goes through. Every human  
4 being on the planet goes through that life  
5 stage."

6 So we're talking about giving life, giving  
7 rights to that person -- to that person. There  
8 is a beginning point in time when they become a  
9 human being, separate -- with separate DNA from  
10 their mother, and we should do all that we can to  
11 protect them in our laws.

12 I ask you to vote yes on 26.

13 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Morris.

15 Ann Reed. Ann Reed. Ann is from Tupelo,  
16 Mississippi, and she is rising for two minutes to  
17 speak for the personhood amendment. Ms. Reed?

18 MS. REED: My name is Ann Reed, and I'm  
19 here as a woman to represent women who have had  
20 abortions, because I am one and because I counsel  
21 many women who have. So I see firsthand -- I  
22 know and I see firsthand the effects that  
23 abortion has on women, the deep emotional pain  
24 and scarring that comes from that, and what it  
25 takes for a woman to actually come through the

1 healing and forgiveness, stories that women tell  
2 as they face the truth that -- I'm not going to  
3 say "they." I'm going to say "we" -- that we  
4 ended the life or lives of our children as we  
5 re-enter those buried memories, because we have  
6 to bury them in order to be able to just get  
7 through life, and those memories of the evidences  
8 of the child who fought for life as we laid on a  
9 table and let that atrocity take place.

10 It was not a problem to be fixed; it was a  
11 life to be nurtured. God created women to be  
12 life givers. What an unbelievable honor that is.  
13 And I just want to stop right there and thank  
14 every man who is in here in support of this  
15 amendment. Because as women are created to be  
16 life givers, men are created to be protectors,  
17 and that's what you are doing.

18 There are so many women who come through  
19 healing, and they have to go back and look at so  
20 many different situations and forgive; and  
21 there's always a man in the picture that we have  
22 to go back and forgive. We have to repent of our  
23 own strong will that overpowered what God put in  
24 that man to be a protector and a provider.

25 A mother's womb should be the safest place

1 for a baby to dwell. Instead, it is the most  
2 dangerous. I just want to read an excerpt from a  
3 letter that one of the ladies recently wrote who  
4 went through post-abortion healing.

5 She says, "I have to be truthful and say  
6 that for 20 years I have chosen to believe and  
7 feel that you both were really -- were not really  
8 my children." She had two abortions. "In that  
9 one action, I am so sorry, and I pray for your  
10 forgiveness. I choose to believe -- I chose -- I  
11 chose to believe you were not a problem -- or  
12 that you were just a problem and that I had --  
13 that I had and that I did enter into a new  
14 relationship with the Lord, and he washed that  
15 sin away.

16 "But the truth is, He does forgive, and He  
17 wanted me to walk, truly walk, in that  
18 forgiveness as the first step and to acknowledge  
19 that you are my children. You were alive at  
20 conception, but my ignorant selfishness never  
21 allowed you to grow and be all that God wanted  
22 you to be."

23 This has got to stop. Please vote yes.

24 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms. Reed.

25 Tiffany Von Hiltgen.

1 MS. VON HILTGEN: From Tupelo.

2 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes. I'm sorry.

3 From Tupelo, Mississippi, to speak for the  
4 amendment. You're recognized for two minutes.

5 Thank you.

6 MS. VON HILTGEN: Thank you.

7 My name is Tiffany Von Hiltgen, and I, like  
8 Ann, am also a woman who chose to have an  
9 abortion at 18 years old; and that decision has  
10 affected every decision and every aspect of my  
11 life since I was 17 years old.

12 I buried those deep-rooted hurts for so  
13 long, and it affected every part of my life. I  
14 turned to drugs, I turned to alcohol, I turned to  
15 abused relationships, more promiscuity, and  
16 nothing fixed the hurt that I incurred upon  
17 myself.

18 How I wished that there was a law in place  
19 that stopped me from making a choice that I had  
20 no right to make. And I heard your pleas; and,  
21 ladies, I appreciate where you're coming from.  
22 Yes, it's going to cost us money, but you know  
23 what? Have we thought about the cost it's  
24 already costing the state from the ladies who are  
25 hurting themselves and the babies and the hurts?

1 I'm a counselor now, and there is not one  
2 lady that I've counseled that's come to me who  
3 has regretted her decision, not one. That tells  
4 us something right there.

5 We don't have the right to do this, and I  
6 thank you so much for being here. I encourage  
7 you to go back and consider. I am a lady who's  
8 done this, and I wish that there was something  
9 that had stopped me. It was so easy to make a  
10 decision. It was so quick and easy. When you're  
11 17 and 18 years old, you don't know what you're  
12 doing. Many of us don't and it's such a life  
13 moment.

14 Have we considered -- have we considered the  
15 people who want to adopt? Have we thought about  
16 that, that this life would be given to families  
17 who want these children? Have we considered  
18 that?

19 I encourage you to vote yes. Thank you so  
20 much.

21 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Tiffany.

22 Is there anyone else here who would like to  
23 speak for or against the amendment?

24 Yes, ma'am. You're recognized. If you  
25 could, come forward, and if you would, speak

1 clearly into the microphone as to what your name  
2 is so that she can record it properly. And if  
3 it's a difficult one like Delbert or something,  
4 you can spell it.

5 MS. SMITH: My name is Monica Smith, and  
6 I'm from north Mississippi.

7 I found out when I was 18 years old that I  
8 couldn't have babies. I had been married for  
9 four months. What if a lady that chose to get  
10 rid of her child -- what if she had just given  
11 her child to me? I know hundreds and hundreds of  
12 ladies, of husbands, of wives, of families, that  
13 will take the child, will take children.

14 I've been blessed with a child now that we  
15 have adopted, and we will adopt as many as the  
16 Lord will grant us; and it doesn't matter what  
17 color, where they come from.

18 Adoption is the only option as far as I can  
19 see. I wish I would have had the choice myself.  
20 I didn't have that choice. It was made for me.  
21 So when you go back out and think and you're  
22 trying to work against this amendment, think  
23 about me. I didn't have a choice, but you have a  
24 choice. You can choose to have a baby and give  
25 it to somebody who cares, somebody that will

1 treat it right, and will be protected in a safe  
2 place.

3 All over the state there's hundreds and  
4 hundreds of adoption agencies. Thank you. And  
5 please tell everybody you know this is not a  
6 political thing; this is a life thing.

7 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you. Is there  
8 anyone else who would like to speak for or  
9 against the amendment?

10 Yes, ma'am. If you would, speak your name  
11 clearly, and we'll recognize you for two minutes.

12 MS. MONTAGUE: My name is Pat Montague,  
13 and I'm from Tupelo currently.

14 When I was conceived, my parents were  
15 hopeless alcoholics. They were fighting. They  
16 were abusing one another. It was the possible --  
17 most possibly, the worst home environment you  
18 could imagine; however, at the time I was -- my  
19 mother found out that she was pregnant with me,  
20 they were separated. They were filing for  
21 divorce, and they were ending their marriage.

22 I have an older sister, and she was not  
23 happy about this; but when my mother found out  
24 she was pregnant with me, there wasn't abortion  
25 available to her. Praise God. I would not be

1 standing here today. I would not have a  
2 beautiful daughter and a beautiful life and be  
3 able to contribute to society with my tax dollars  
4 and counsel people and bring them to a knowledge  
5 that they can be strong, productive people if my  
6 mother had had the choice that has been in place  
7 for the last 35 years.

8 It isn't about your choice to do with your  
9 body what you wish. It's about the fact that  
10 once you are pregnant, your choice is gone. That  
11 baby -- that baby has a right to live. Now, you  
12 don't have to keep that baby. You can give it up  
13 for adoption. You can do whatever you choose  
14 with that child after you give it life, but you  
15 owe it to that child to give it life.

16 And I thank God that my mother made that  
17 decision. As a result of me coming along, my mom  
18 and dad decided not to divorce. They lived  
19 together for another 30 years happily, and I  
20 praise God that, because of me, my family was not  
21 broken.

22 Thank you. Vote yes on 26.

23 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Anyone else would  
24 like to speak on the amendment?

25 Yes, ma'am. You're recognized. Would you

1 give your name and your city, please, ma'am.

2 MS. FREDERICK: I'm Jennifer Frederick  
3 from Pontotoc, Mississippi.

4 I didn't plan to speak tonight, but as a  
5 woman, I have to stand here and say please vote  
6 yes on Amendment 26. These are children we're  
7 talking about, not just cells. It's not just a  
8 choice about what we want or even about what's  
9 right and wrong. They are people made in God's  
10 image, and it is wrong to kill them.

11 And I'm sorry I'm not good at speaking, but  
12 I just really, really want to thank all of the  
13 men who are protectors, who are brave and godly,  
14 and who are to speak out for the women and  
15 children.

16 I mean, I'm a woman. I don't like to speak,  
17 but I guess that just comes more naturally to the  
18 men sometimes; so they wind up being some of the  
19 main speakers for personhood. And I really  
20 appreciate them speaking out for those who cannot  
21 speak for themselves -- and for us who would  
22 rather just take a back seat -- that they care  
23 about our health, our welfare, our bodies, our  
24 spiritual health.

25 I know most of you here claim to be

1 Christians. Most of you claim to be Christians.  
2 Aren't we thankful that men care about our  
3 spiritual health? And I just really appreciate  
4 them and how God has used them, and I just ask  
5 you to vote yes on Amendment 26.

6 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.  
7 Frederick.

8 Anyone else would like to speak? Yes, sir.

9 UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: Can you look this  
10 way?

11 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Here we go. I didn't  
12 see your hand, ma'am. You can go ahead. Let's  
13 try this side first. It's kind of like church:  
14 We've gotten down the middle. If you would, give  
15 your name and your city, please, ma'am.

16 MS. SCHREIBER: Hi, my name is Sara  
17 Schreiber, and I'm from Oxford. And I did not  
18 plan to speak tonight, but I know that there are  
19 many women who have had abortions and regret it.  
20 I don't doubt that at all, but I do suspect that  
21 there are many women who have had abortions and  
22 don't regret it. Not that it was a wonderful  
23 thing that they are glad they did it, but perhaps  
24 the circumstances really would have been  
25 life-threatening if they had a baby.

1 I have a friend who grew up in an alcoholic  
2 household, very abusive, very alcoholic. She  
3 didn't have a great childhood, and I think one of  
4 the things that gets to me the most is that  
5 Mississippi claims to be or it may be -- claims  
6 to be the safest place for children.

7 But what I would like to say is where were  
8 you when she was growing up, when she was being  
9 abused, when her mother was being abused? Who  
10 worried about her life then?

11 It seems to me it's all pre-born. Where  
12 were you? I'm sorry. You know, she grew up in a  
13 household -- well, it's a little too late now.  
14 So just think about the situations where there  
15 are women who had abortions and it was their best  
16 decision.

17 Anyway, thank you. Please vote no.

18 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you. If you  
19 would, state your name, sir, and you'll be  
20 recognized for two minutes.

21 MR. SANDERS: Marvin Sanders.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Mr. Sanders. Mr.  
23 Sanders, where are you from?

24 MR. SANDERS: From Tupelo.

25 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Tupelo, Mississippi.

1 Yes, sir.

2 MR. SANDERS: Speaking on behalf of.

3 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Speaking for the  
4 amendment. Go ahead, sir, please.

5 MR. SANDERS: I wasn't planning to speak  
6 tonight. I was kind of distracted by this thing  
7 that looks like a purse, and it was kind of  
8 embarrassing.

9 But I do want to say that a good friend of  
10 mine, Dr. Jack Willke, who was the founder of the  
11 national Right To Life, an obstetrician that  
12 performed thousands of deliveries over the course  
13 of his life, told me once that in all of his  
14 practice he had -- was only aware of one case  
15 where the life of the mother was actually in  
16 danger.

17 Now, there was some others that had to be,  
18 you know, worked through this for the safety of  
19 both the mother and the baby, but there was only  
20 one that he knew of. There are not a lot of  
21 cases where the life of the mother is truly in  
22 danger. That's number one.

23 The other two, rape and incest, those are  
24 very difficult situations, and I understand that;  
25 and anybody who goes through that is going to

1 need some real counseling to get through it, no  
2 matter what they do.

3 James Robinson, one of America's leading  
4 evangelists -- her name escapes me now. The  
5 black singer from the '50s.

6 UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Ethel Waters.

7 MR. SANDERS: -- Ethel Waters, great  
8 singer, great actor -- actress -- in both  
9 television and films, a great role model for  
10 people.

11 Look up Nick Cannon and watch some of his  
12 videos. These are all people whose life started  
13 as a product of conception at the time of rape.  
14 I personally can't imagine a world without those  
15 people in it.

16 Now, some of you are not old enough to  
17 remember Ethel Waters. She had a great impact on  
18 my life. I hear her in my head singing "His Eye  
19 is on the Sparrow" a lot.

20 I was once a product of conception. My  
21 parents were poor. They could not afford a  
22 child. When I hear people discussing whether to  
23 have a child or not, they talk about not being  
24 able to afford it, they talk about not being able  
25 to have -- not being able to do something in the

1 future if they have a child, their plans would be  
2 interrupted; and I'm here to tell you that most  
3 people who are ever born were not convenient or  
4 not financially stable at that moment.

5 Everybody has financial problems, and you  
6 add an extra burden onto that, and that's just  
7 more financial trouble. If you add another baby  
8 to the mix, that's going to affect your schedule.

9 All of us were like that, and I thank God  
10 that my mother didn't even think about having an  
11 abortion.

12 So that's it. Vote yes on 26.

13 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Sanders.

15 Yes, ma'am. Would you like to speak? Would  
16 you come forward, please, ma'am. If you could,  
17 state your name clearly so that our court  
18 reporter can get it clearly, and you're  
19 recognized for two minutes.

20 MS. COOPER-OWENS: Hello, my name is  
21 Deirdre Cooper-Owens. I am from Oxford,  
22 Mississippi, and like the last slate of speakers  
23 on both sides, I did not plan to speak, but I am  
24 absolutely appalled at the bag of political  
25 tricks that have played by the Evangelical Right.

1           First, this is a legal issue, although folk  
2 would have you believe that it isn't. It is a  
3 legal issue, because it is called Initiative 26.  
4 Everybody who lives in the state of Mississippi,  
5 believe it or not, doesn't necessarily adhere to  
6 the same beliefs and ideologies.

7           Although I was born a Southerner, I was  
8 raised a Christian, I made the choice because I  
9 could not to necessarily believe in a Christian  
10 ideology. That's my choice. And, in fact, the  
11 constitution deems it so, because I have a right  
12 to either believe or not to believe.

13          And it's funny to me that in this political  
14 bag of tricks, I mean, it's been done for  
15 dramatic effect where the women have come out and  
16 they have cried and they have talked about these  
17 women who feel heartily sorry for all of the sins  
18 that they committed. Of course, they would. You  
19 work in a church, I mean, or you're a Christian.  
20 Every last one of you have invoked the name of  
21 Jesus. You invoked the name of God.

22          There is a bias inherit in that, and so of  
23 course the people are coming to you with this  
24 problem; and there is a religious bent to what  
25 you have to say. You're going to have one side

1 of the story.

2 Although I have never had the intense  
3 challenge of being faced with any kind of  
4 reproductive issue or having to decide whether to  
5 have an abortion or not, I know plenty of women  
6 who have done so. I know couples who have done  
7 so. And they have not been besieged or haunted  
8 by sleepless nights. That is not the story of  
9 every person who has chosen to have an abortion.

10 And we're also making this an issue about  
11 abortion when it is clearly about defining what a  
12 person is. Abortion is legal, whether you like  
13 it or not. The personhood initiative is not  
14 about whether we need to make abortion illegal;  
15 it is about defining a person.

16 And so for me, you know, trying to think  
17 about this logically, I am just stupefied and  
18 almost discombobulated by the illogical arguments  
19 that have been rolled out tonight. I mean, all  
20 the way from the kind of politicized as genocide  
21 for African-Americans. No, it's not. It's not.  
22 You can think that it is, but it's not. There  
23 are things that are killing African-Americans,  
24 and trust me when I say abortion is not listed as  
25 one of them.

1 I have a Ph.D. from UCLA. I studied the  
2 history of medicine. In fact, I published on it.  
3 I was a fellow at the American College of  
4 Obstetricians and Gynecologist, and this is not  
5 the leading cause of death by any of those  
6 credible scientifically based --

7 (INAUDIBLE COMMENT FROM PUBLIC)

8 MS. COOPER-OWENS: Of course you would  
9 have this kind of slanted way of thinking about  
10 it, and you don't necessarily or you're not open  
11 to people who have a different opinion.

12 Fortunately, people, what I do, I teach  
13 people who don't think like me on a daily basis;  
14 and so the good thing about it is at least I'm  
15 able to share and have a synergistic relationship  
16 with them about these kinds of issues instead of  
17 steamrolling them and having these kind of  
18 emotional knee-jerk responses to issues that  
19 aren't even on the table.

20 This is a legal issue, not a spiritual one,  
21 and it's not about abortion.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes, sir. We have  
23 one more, and I think our time is it; so we'll  
24 let you close. And we'll recognize you for two  
25 minutes, sir.

1 MR. DAWSON: Thank you, ma'am. I really  
2 appreciate what you just got through saying,  
3 because although you don't believe that this is a  
4 spiritual issue, Mississippi does. Mississippi  
5 is a godly --

6 MS. COOPER-OWENS: It was illegal. It was  
7 illegal --

8 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Ma'am, we need to let  
9 him --

10 MR. DAWSON: Ma'am, I didn't interrupt you  
11 while you --

12 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: We honored your two  
13 minutes.

14 MS. COOPER-OWENS: I'm sorry.

15 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: We need to honor his.

16 MS. COOPER-OWENS: I'm sorry. I  
17 apologize. Please do continue.

18 MR. DAWSON: Mississippi is a Godly state.  
19 Mississippi believes in God, and not only God but  
20 Judeo-Christian God. And I just want to say, you  
21 know, you mentioned talking about genocide. And  
22 I know Reverend Parker can speak more to this,  
23 and, actually, Mr. Lachina probably can speak  
24 more to this. A quick Google search reveals that  
25 Mr. Lachina is from Seattle and is a chaplain for

1       planned parenthood.

2           So just so you guys know what we're getting  
3       into here -- and I want to read a couple of  
4       quotes from your founder. Do you mind? Margaret  
5       Sanger said, "We do not want word to get out that  
6       we want to exterminate the Negro population."

7           Another quote, if I can get down here to it.

8           UNIDENTIFIED MALE: That's a lie, but go  
9       ahead.

10          MR. DAWSON: "We prefer the policy of  
11       immediate sterilization of making sure that  
12       parenthood is, quote, absolutely prohibited to  
13       the feebleminded."

14          UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What's the website?

15          MR. DAWSON: That's your founder, sir,  
16       that said those words.

17          I also want to say that Planned Parenthood  
18       wants to put \$12 million at least into making  
19       sure that this does not pass. Do you know why?  
20       Because they get billions upon billions and  
21       billions of your tax dollars. Your hard-earned  
22       money goes directly to them so that they can in  
23       turn kill innocent babies.

24          Mr. Prewitt pointed out they sell their body  
25       parts for even more money. God bless you. I

1 appreciate you guys.

2 Vote yes on 26. Yeson26.net.

3 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you very much.

4 This is the last -- this is the last one, because  
5 we've got three other issues, so we'll recognize  
6 you for a minute, if you would like to come  
7 forward.

8 If you'll give your name, sir, and this will  
9 be the last one for this evening. We've got  
10 three other initiatives, and I know we've got a  
11 lot of people who want to speak on those.

12 MR. HEMMINS: Hey, everybody. My name is  
13 Andy Hemmins. I live in Oxford, which is  
14 obviously a hotbed of abortion in the state.  
15 Everybody who is against the amendment seems to  
16 be from Oxford, but I am speaking against the  
17 amendment.

18 Now, I'm not from Mississippi, but I've  
19 lived here for 15 years, so I feel as if it's  
20 become a part of my identity. And let me tell  
21 you that Mississippi has a reputation that  
22 precedes it, a rather unfortunate reputation, not  
23 just in America, but around the world. To put it  
24 politely, they are a little behind the times.

25 Now, if this amendment was passed, I mean,

1 this would do nothing to mend hearts. This would  
2 only harm their reputation.

3 And all the people that come up here and  
4 quote God or Ronald Reagan -- obviously, the two  
5 people are interchangeable in this part of the  
6 country -- I mean, I think -- I don't know much  
7 about the U.S. Constitution, but I think the  
8 First Amendment said that there is -- you're not  
9 allowed to establish a state church.

10 I mean, this is exactly what you're trying  
11 to do in Mississippi. Not everybody in  
12 Mississippi wants to establish a patriarchal  
13 Christian theocracy. And that might be great in  
14 your own house. I mean, I don't know how the  
15 people put up with you. I don't know how your  
16 own family survived, men, that want to do that in  
17 your own house, but please don't do it in my  
18 house. It's just not right.

19 And, you know, I know there are a lot of  
20 professional religious people here today, and I  
21 know you can outquote me. But I think Jesus said  
22 that you should not stand in the door of the  
23 temple. And a lot of the people over here just  
24 seem to love standing in the door of the temple  
25 and waving to everyone; but we're not all like

1 that, and I would really appreciate you not  
2 pushing that onto me.

3 And I would urge you, for what it's worth,  
4 to vote no on the amendment. Thank you.

5 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you very much.

6 I want to thank each of you for taking the  
7 time to come tonight. I appreciate your  
8 participation in our democracy. That's what this  
9 hearing is about. You can see all of these  
10 comments on our website. We're going to take --  
11 we're running over just a little bit. We're  
12 going to take a five-minute break, and then we're  
13 going to address voter ID and eminent domain. I  
14 encourage you that have spoken to stay for all  
15 the presentations, because it appears to me you  
16 are all going to be voters, so I would encourage  
17 you to stay.

18 Thank you very much. We'll break for five  
19 minutes.

20 (OFF THE RECORD)

21 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Okay. If everyone  
22 will be seated, and we will start on voter ID.  
23 Thank you-all for coming, and we'll get started  
24 on voter ID here.

25 Jeremy? Jeremy is in the back visiting

1 around.

2 All right. Ladies and gentleman, thank you  
3 again for staying. Thank you, Mike. Good to see  
4 you.

5 Voter ID. And I would like to -- voter  
6 identification has been proposed as the second  
7 amendment to the Mississippi Constitution. It's  
8 listed as Initiative 27, "Should the Mississippi  
9 Constitution be amended to require a person to  
10 submit government-issued photo identification in  
11 order to vote?"

12 Inside -- and I won't read the whole  
13 initiative; it's quite long -- but inside it  
14 discusses the initiative itself and that the fact  
15 that the elector would have to show a  
16 government-issued photo identification before  
17 being allowed to vote, and it has four different  
18 exclusions from that requirement.

19 And it also says, "This provision shall not  
20 be construed to require photo identification to  
21 register to vote. This provision only requires  
22 government-issued photo identification for  
23 casting a ballot."

24 So we ask first if there's anyone who would  
25 like to speak for voter ID.

1 Yes, sir, Grant. I have yours. Mr. Sowell  
2 from Tupelo, Mississippi, you will be recognized.

3 MR. SOWELL: Thank you. I'm Grant Sowell  
4 from Tupelo, Mississippi.

5 I was reading an article recently of where  
6 voter fraud took place in our state, and it was  
7 in the Tunica Times, I believe, was the paper  
8 where it was written about.

9 It's amazing how it didn't get any national news or any big major  
10 news, because this person -- her name was Lessadolla Sowers, I  
11 believe -- had ten counts of fraud. She was convicted April of this  
12 year, and she voted in four people's name who was dead people. Now,  
13 what an atrocity to the family members that that was their grandmother  
14 or whoever, you know. I think that's just a sad thing.

15 Another thing is this: The NAACP would come  
16 out and have you to believe that it's some myth  
17 that there's no need for voter ID, that there's  
18 not a problem. In fact, Al Sharpton and Debbie  
19 Wasserman Schultz had a little dialogue, and they  
20 were saying, "You're more likely to get struck by  
21 lightning than to be a victim of voter fraud."

22 I've heard recently of a guy in Mississippi  
23 that did get struck by lightning, but I hadn't  
24 heard of ten people in Mississippi getting struck  
25 by lightning. And, you know, I think this is one

1 person in one city who was caught. Who knows how  
2 many other?

3 There have been other crimes this lady had  
4 committed, but she was an official with the  
5 NAACP. Let me tell you: Voter ID, I think, if  
6 you're not doing anything wrong, you have nothing  
7 to hide. But if you are doing something wrong,  
8 let's say if you're an illegal immigrant, you  
9 have no need voting in America. If you're a  
10 felon, you have no need voting in America. If  
11 you're dead, you can't vote in America.

12 And so it's just that simple, so I think  
13 there's nothing to hide for voter ID. There's  
14 nothing wrong with it, so I say voter ID, like  
15 personhood, is a great thing. Let's do it in  
16 Mississippi.

17 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
18 Mr. Sowell.

19 Is Ms. Lambright here? Ms. Lambright  
20 usually speaks against. Is there anyone who  
21 would like to speak against voter ID? We have  
22 had less discussion about voter ID in our public  
23 forums at each of the -- as we've gone forward.

24 And, Brandon? Where's Mr. Presley? Here we  
25 are. If you'd come forward, we'll get started on

1 eminent domain. Is David Rumbarger here? If  
2 y'all would come forward.

3 We've had less discussions about voter ID.  
4 It has been around a good long time, and we've  
5 had less discussions at each of our conferences  
6 about voter ID.

7 MS. BRINTON: Secretary Hosemann?

8 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes, ma'am.

9 MS. BRINTON: I'm sorry. Could I say  
10 something about voter ID?

11 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes, ma'am, you can.  
12 We'll recognize you for two minutes.

13 MS. BRINTON: Thank you.

14 My name is Karen Brinton, and I'm from  
15 Tupelo, Mississippi. I currently live in Tupelo,  
16 Mississippi, and have for the last 24 years, but  
17 I was born and raised in North Carolina. And as  
18 you can tell, the first time I ever voted was not  
19 in Mississippi; it was in North Carolina where I  
20 had to show identification.

21 So when I moved to Mississippi and I voted  
22 for the first time, I pulled out my driver's  
23 license. Imagine my shock when I found out I  
24 didn't have to show my driver's license to prove  
25 I was who I said I was.

1           And it just seems common sense to be able to  
2 ask somebody to prove that they are who they say  
3 they are when they want to partake of the  
4 privilege of voting in this country, so I ask you  
5 to vote yes on voter ID.

6           SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you.

7           Eminent domain is also enclosed in your  
8 brochures, if you would like to look at those.  
9 Eminent domain. "Should the government be  
10 prohibited from taking private property by  
11 eminent domain and then transferring it to other  
12 persons?"

13          The initiative itself is enclosed, and,  
14 again, it's lengthy, so I won't read it all. And  
15 I think it's up here. "No property acquired by  
16 the exercise of the power of eminent domain under  
17 the laws of the state of Mississippi shall, for a  
18 period of ten years after its acquisition, be  
19 transferred to any interest -- or any interest  
20 therein transferred to any person,  
21 nongovernmental entity, public-private  
22 partnership, corporation, or other business  
23 entity with the following exceptions."

24          And it lists a number of exceptions for  
25 public conveyance, utilities, water, sewer, and

1       what not. The above provisions shall not apply  
2       where the use of eminent domain removes a public  
3       nuisance, takes a structure that's beyond repair  
4       and unfit for human habitation, it's used to  
5       acquire abandoned property, or eliminates the  
6       threat to public health or safety caused by the  
7       property in its current condition.

8               So the eminent domain amendment is  
9       Initiative No. 31, and it was the third one that  
10      was provided -- that was registered for tonight.

11             We're pleased to have with us Commissioner  
12      Brandon Presley to speak for eminent domain, and,  
13      Brandon, you're recognized for five minutes.

14             COMMISSIONER PRESLEY: Thank you. Thank  
15      you, Mr. Secretary.

16             I appreciate the opportunity to be here  
17      tonight to talk about this very important -- very  
18      important -- amendment. Absent a veto by the  
19      governor, we wouldn't be here tonight. The  
20      legislature, both houses, by huge bipartisan  
21      majorities, saw this as a serious-enough issue to  
22      pass it with overwhelming majorities. There was  
23      a veto, and the veto was sustained in the state  
24      senate; so we're here tonight.

25             As I have read this debate and followed it

1 over the last couple of months, I've kind of been  
2 surprised nobody under the sound of my voice is  
3 for big government. Nobody pushes that.

4 We're not up here tonight advocating that,  
5 but it has really surprised me to read the  
6 editorials and the comments from people, who you  
7 would normally see rage at anything that smacked  
8 of anything close to big government, come out in  
9 favor of probably the rawest, ugliest element of  
10 big government, and that is big government having  
11 the opportunity to decide what's better use for  
12 your land than you know.

13 Now, we're not talking about taking roads --  
14 we're not talking about taking lands for roads or  
15 for bridges or for schools. We're talking about  
16 taking land to enrich corporate shareholders to  
17 make corporations richer.

18 Now, sure, they employ jobs. We could  
19 debate all day how many of those are employed and  
20 how many that we end up seeing shipped to China  
21 each year in our country, but we understand that.  
22 There'll be an argument for economic development.  
23 David's my friend. Randy Kelly, who is here to  
24 speak, is my dear friend. We just see a little  
25 different eye to eye on this. It's nothing at

1 all personal.

2 I think it's very clear that this initiative  
3 is an initiative to protect the basic private  
4 property rights of "We, the People." It doesn't  
5 say, "We, the corporate shareholders; we, the  
6 corporations." "We, the people."

7 Private property rights are sacred in  
8 America. They are sacred in Mississippi. They  
9 should be sacred and protected by our  
10 legislature; and, unfortunately, because that  
11 didn't happen, we're here tonight.

12 Now, my favorite character in all of  
13 literature and life and somebody I try to think  
14 about when I'm faced with issues like that is  
15 Atticus Finch from the great novel "To Kill a  
16 Mockingbird" by Harper Lee. In an emotionally  
17 charged time in much different circumstances on  
18 the front porch of their home in Maycomb,  
19 Alabama, Atticus told Scout sitting in the swing,  
20 said, "Scout, you'll get along better if you'll  
21 learn this one simple trick, and that is to crawl  
22 in the skin of somebody else and walk around.  
23 You never know the other person until you crawl  
24 in their skin and walk around a little while."

25 I want to ask you tonight and ask the people

1       who are opposed to this bill and are opposed to  
2       private property rights to help me and walk with  
3       me tonight as we crawl in the skin of average  
4       Mississippians. The family farmer. Let's crawl  
5       in his skin a minute, who's worked the land in  
6       good years and bad, seen boom and bust, wet and  
7       dry. He's worked the land. It's his land. He  
8       paid for it by the sweat of his brow. He paid  
9       for it. It's his land.

10       Let's crawl in the skin of somebody like my  
11       grandmother who's passed on, who was a garment  
12       factory worker in Reed's Manufacturing in  
13       Nettleton 40-something years she was there.  
14       Worked every day. All that was left for her was  
15       a little clapboard house in rural Monroe County  
16       she worked with my granddaddy and paid for, and  
17       her years -- and all the years of her life, it  
18       was all she had left of that once relationship  
19       with her husband and family. Let's crawl in her  
20       skin a minute tonight.

21       Let's crawl in the skin of that young couple  
22       maybe growing up and building a house on  
23       Granddaddy's land, that perfect spot at the  
24       creek, the perfect spot under the beautiful  
25       trees. It's their land. They paid for it. It

1 is their land. It is not the land that the  
2 government can decide who is best to have it, and  
3 that decision should be made at the kitchen table  
4 of families in Mississippi, not at the corporate  
5 boardroom and use government as their tool.

6 Ladies and gentlemen, there is nothing  
7 uglier about big government; there is nothing  
8 bigger about big government than when the  
9 government decides how best to use your property.  
10 It's not the government's property.

11 Now, 43 states around the nation -- 43  
12 states around the nation -- have enacted  
13 legislation to deal with the Kelo decision except  
14 Mississippi. We get an "F" in this with guess  
15 who else? Massachusetts. That's not too good a  
16 sister state, is it?

17 This is not a partisan issue. Both -- well,  
18 there's two on the Democratic side -- candidates  
19 for governor and Republican have endorsed this,  
20 have said they would vote yes on Initiative 31.  
21 It's not a partisan issue.

22 Ladies and gentlemen, this is an issue of  
23 corporate socialism that takes the people's land,  
24 redistributes it to the corporations where they  
25 can make profits for their shareholders

1       irrespective of the people's interest.

2           Now, I want to close tonight with a quote  
3       from Andy Taggart, not your Left Wing Liberals in  
4       Mississippi. Andy is former chief of staff to  
5       Governor Kirk Fordice. Andy said the following  
6       in a blog post. I'm going to paraphrase it. It  
7       had a few expletives -- one expletive I'll take  
8       out -- but he said that these people who want to  
9       be against Initiative 31 believe that the  
10      government should be able to decide or some --  
11      the government should be able to decide when some  
12      businessman can make better use of your land than  
13      you can and then force you to sell it to that  
14      businessman to own.

15      When we oppose that government grab, Jerry  
16      -- that's his counterpart -- calls it  
17      parochialism. Leland Speed, who sued to stop  
18      this movement, calls it nuts. I call it freedom.

19      Ladies and gentlemen, I want to close  
20      tonight with the last quote from the authority of  
21      all authorities when He told us, "Do unto others  
22      as you would have them do unto you."

23      I asked of Mr. Speed how would you feel if  
24      it was your house? We don't see eminent domain  
25      used at country clubs. We don't see eminent

1 domain used at gated neighborhoods. You don't  
2 see it used in places like this. Working rural  
3 people, time and again.

4 I ask you to vote yes on Initiative 31.  
5 Stand up for the foundation and principles in our  
6 nation. Private property rights, not corporate  
7 socialism.

8 Thank you.

9 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
10 Commissioner.

11 David? David Rumbarger is recognized to  
12 speak against the amendment.

13 MR. RUMBARGER: Well, I'm a little without  
14 word tonight, but I did write some things down;  
15 so if I can read, I can speak. I am not a  
16 politician. I don't make stump speeches.

17 I can't raise the emotion of Atticus Finch,  
18 although I admired him, but I can tell you about  
19 demagoguery in Washington and Jackson; and I  
20 think that's what we're subject to at this point  
21 in time.

22 Our very eloquent speaker certainly spent a  
23 lot of time talking about property rights.

24 First, I believe in property rights. I am a  
25 private property owner. I spent 25 years in a

1 career in economic development working with  
2 people to develop their property -- individual  
3 landowners, private landowners, and companies --  
4 to make something good out of it.

5 Nothing really happens until property is  
6 developed. Whether it's a farm, whether it's  
7 commercial, whether it's industry, until that  
8 property is developed, nothing really happens in  
9 our society. It drives our quality of life. It  
10 produces tax revenue for public infrastructure  
11 like roads and bridges, and it underlies  
12 everything that makes our communities good and  
13 right places to live. Real property development  
14 is truly the rising tide that lifts all boats.

15 Second, I don't like eminent domain. It is  
16 disdainful. It is awful. Neither did the  
17 Founding Fathers of our country -- in Mississippi  
18 either -- and you don't have to like it either,  
19 but you have to understand it.

20 I heard the governor say one time the  
21 proponents of Proposition 31 have a bumper  
22 sticker, and the opponents have an essay; and so  
23 tonight I'm going to try to delve into that essay  
24 as our Founding Fathers did when they realized  
25 that on rare occasions there is a public good and

1 it makes it necessary to take private property.

2 That's the reason our federal Founding  
3 Fathers put the Fifth Amendment in the Bill of  
4 Rights in the constitution in 1787. It's the  
5 reason the forebearers put it in the original  
6 1817 Mississippi Constitution, the reason it  
7 stayed there and was kept in the 1890  
8 constitution, and it's still there today.

9 What they put in was a protection for all  
10 owners of private property in this country and in  
11 this state that says that your property, my  
12 property, will not be taken except for a public  
13 purpose and then only in the payment of just and  
14 due compensation.

15 We have a constitutional right in  
16 Mississippi and in the U.S. today, as we've had  
17 it from the very beginning. That fact has not  
18 changed. And let me ask you as you sit here  
19 tonight: How many cases have been adjudicated  
20 and the verdict where my esteemed colleague  
21 talked about a single incidence for eminent  
22 domain that's been abused in our state? How  
23 many? Twenty, 30, 100? There's zero cases that  
24 have gone through to our supreme court and to our  
25 national supreme court or anything like it. Just

1 and due compensation was paid in every case in  
2 eminent domain in Mississippi.

3 And let me talk about the case that has  
4 become so famous in kind of promoting this, and  
5 that's Toyota. And I read some of the comments  
6 from the other public hearings where folks said  
7 it was not required to bring Toyota, and let me  
8 give you the real story, because I am the one  
9 that was in the room. I am an eyewitness to that  
10 process.

11 In that process there were about 150 to 200  
12 acres that had been sold off mineral rights. In  
13 public land or in private land, you can own your  
14 property and you can own the mineral rights  
15 underneath it. In the past people came through  
16 riding on horses going to Texas buying up mineral  
17 rights. We found out in Union County,  
18 Mississippi, where Toyota is located, that in the  
19 last 100 years there are only two wells permitted  
20 by the DEQ or the state during that last 100  
21 years. Both of them dry wells. So there really  
22 was no exploration for oil and natural gas in  
23 Union County, Mississippi. South Mississippi,  
24 it's different, but those acres that were imbued  
25 by that particular premise on their title where

1 the mineral rights were sold off allowed those  
2 mineral right holders in the 1860s and 1870s,  
3 their heirs, which now you can imagine numbered  
4 in the hundreds, to come back and potentially  
5 drill a hole in the middle of the parking lot or  
6 the middle of the shop floor of Toyota  
7 Manufacturing in Mississippi.

8 That was untenable for Toyota. They would  
9 not have located unless we had the authority and  
10 the right to be able to condemn those mineral  
11 rights from those holders in the 1870s today.

12 And we set up a trust fund in the Union  
13 County Courthouse. If anybody comes forward and  
14 can show due cause that they are an heir to those  
15 mineral rights and mineral rights are due to be  
16 paid, they will be paid out of that trust fund.

17 One other instance that I'll talk about in  
18 Toyota is where a church was chartered in the  
19 late 1870s, a two-acre parcel on the edge of the  
20 property. None of the founding church members --  
21 which were seven in the title -- were available.  
22 They either had passed on or had moved away from  
23 Mississippi. We could not find them. We spent  
24 two months trying to find those people. If we  
25 could not have condemned with eminent domain that

1 two and a half acres, it would not be a part of  
2 the Toyota tract, and it would have impugned  
3 their ability to be able to sublocate it there.

4 And you talk about livelihood. Let me give  
5 you a story of crawling in a man's skin. There  
6 was a fellow named David -- not me, but another  
7 fellow -- who was laid off from Hancock Fabrics.  
8 David searched for ten months to try to find a  
9 job. He was recently hired by Toyota, and now  
10 he's providing for his family.

11 No one in the Toyota process was not paid  
12 due compensation according to two or maybe three  
13 appraisals. In that process, due compensation  
14 was paid.

15 It is a fact that there is a long list of  
16 exceptions. If you'll look into the brochure  
17 that Mr. Hosemann gave you, it says the  
18 provisions shall not apply to drainage, levee  
19 facilities, usage of roads, bridge, public  
20 conveyance, flood controls, levee components,  
21 seawalls, dams, toll roads, public airports,  
22 public ports, public harbors, public wayports,  
23 common carrier facilities, and other public  
24 utilities. I mean, how many exceptions can we  
25 have?

1           And the only exception we ask for -- and the  
2           reason that we are here -- is that the senate and  
3           the house would not go ahead and adhere to super  
4           projects over \$150 million employing over a  
5           thousand people.

6           If we pass this, we do become uncompetitive.  
7           Sure, 43 other states have passed it, not in the  
8           form that we're looking at, but they have passed  
9           an eminent domain reform.

10          We are for eminent domain reform also, but  
11          don't impugn the process of our ability to  
12          recruit better and more jobs for Mississippi, put  
13          us behind those other 42 states, and be hamstrung  
14          by Initiative 31. You know, it's not really  
15          going to hurt Tupelo and Lee County. I'll tell  
16          you that.

17          We have three industrial parks with over  
18          1200 acres of available land today under our CDF  
19          control or the Lee County Board of Supervisors.  
20          So it's not about Lee County or CDF. We've  
21          already recruited our Toyota project. We've  
22          already gained all those 1600 acres that we  
23          needed for that project.

24          What it's really going to hurt is the small  
25          communities in the hinterlands of our state that

1 can't afford to buy industrial property or to  
2 develop for industry. And so the poor will get  
3 poorer, and the counties like Lee County will be  
4 all right, because we've planned better than  
5 those counties like Sunflower and others around  
6 our state.

7 I do believe it will do irrevocable harm to  
8 our ability to recruit industry. I think the  
9 best situation was let the legislature decide and  
10 let our constitution be the most domain part of  
11 the process. It provides a solution today that  
12 has worked. And how many cases did we adjudicate  
13 that were illegitimate? Zero in Mississippi.

14 Don't let the nation go the way of what we  
15 should not do. Vote no.

16 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, David.

17 We'll go to our public speaking part. David  
18 Griffin from Baldwin, Mississippi. David, you're  
19 recognized to speak for the eminent domain  
20 initiative.

21 MR. GRIFFIN: Thank you.

22 I'm not here to debate for or against.  
23 However, I would like for you to vote for it.  
24 I'm here to paint a picture to tell you from a  
25 personal standpoint what's happened in my family

1 and their property, and so I'd like to do that.

2 These men, they do a great job. And I know  
3 David. He knows what -- he thinks he's know what  
4 I'm fixing to say, and he's going to be on  
5 target, but here it is.

6 Let me paint a picture. Valentine's Day,  
7 1945. My grandfather moved to south of  
8 Baldwyn -- used to be Guntown -- bought a  
9 256-acre tract of land. Okay. Some of these  
10 fine highway patrolmen probably ride up and down  
11 their property if they go north of 348 plumb up  
12 to Get-N-Go with the Berkline.

13 So here is -- if you will let me paint this  
14 picture, here is this 256 acres. Okay? Old 45  
15 is over here. This is -- which was currently 45.  
16 That's Old 45. I was there the day the folks  
17 from the highway department and other folks  
18 pulled up, and I'm standing in the middle of this  
19 property in painting this picture. And they  
20 talked to my grandfather about the property and  
21 about what the project was going to cost and  
22 trying to buy this land and do all of that, and I  
23 was shocked.

24 My grandfather told the gentleman, he said,  
25 "Sir," he said, "you see that 45 we have?"

1 He said, "Yes, sir."

2 He said, "I own land on both sides of that  
3 highway. If you'll pick either side you want,  
4 I'll give you that property to four lane that  
5 road."

6 The gentleman said, "No, sir. Nope." He  
7 rolled the map out. He said, "We're coming right  
8 down the middle." They got 55 acres right down  
9 the middle.

10 My grandfather said, "Well, let me ask you  
11 this" -- at that time, that was old 45 -- "do you  
12 see old 45?" I've got to hurry.

13 He said, "Yes, sir."

14 He said, "I own property on both sides of  
15 it. I'll give it to you and we'll save the  
16 taxpayers' money. Let's use our head instead of  
17 coming down the middle."

18 The guy said, "That's okay, Mr. Griffin.  
19 We're going to take your land."

20 My granddaddy said, "Oh, it's not for sale."

21 He said, "We're going to use eminent  
22 domain."

23 Eminent domain they did. Yes, we fought it  
24 in the court system. Yes, we got a little more  
25 money. But by the time we paid the lawyers and

1 everybody else, we lost. And here's what we  
2 really lost.

3 Thirty seconds. I'll hurry.

4 Here's where we really lost. Down that  
5 field where they put in box culverts and exits  
6 and everything else, we lost.

7 Now let's follow today to the APPM, I  
8 believe, and I call it Toyota if you live in  
9 Baldwin. They took seven acres of their  
10 property. They left us one and a half acres over  
11 here with a duplex apartment. They took six  
12 rental projects. Never receive any more income  
13 from those. We were offered 50,000 an acre for  
14 that land, and then they -- not by CDF or the  
15 County or whoever -- by an individual wanting to  
16 put in a major business. We ended up getting --  
17 they ended up offering us 10,000. Lost six  
18 rental residences. We'll never get income from  
19 those residents again. Gave those tenants a  
20 notice.

21 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Finish up, sir.

22 MR. GRIFFIN: Finish up?

23 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes, sir.

24 MR. GRIFFIN: Had 90 days to vacate -- no  
25 less than 90 days to vacate the premises. A

1 waste of taxpayer dollars, but, you know, that's  
2 where we're going to have to start with reform,  
3 what we do instead of greasing people's pockets  
4 or their hands because so and so owns this or so  
5 and so owns that.

6 I know very well about industry. My  
7 grandfather practically gave away a lot of land  
8 where Hancock Fabrics is. And he told me this,  
9 because I tried to talk him out of selling it --  
10 but I agree with him -- he said, "Son, people  
11 have to have jobs. They need jobs to support  
12 their families."

13 And I definitely agree. I think if you  
14 check our family track record, we'll do any and  
15 everything to help anybody that's willing to  
16 work.

17 Also, on the other side of 45 now, for the  
18 local citizens -- by the way, APPM has a straight  
19 shot into their factory. 500 semis a day is what  
20 I was told was going to be in there. I also took  
21 the gentleman engineer, and I said, "You cannot  
22 tell me, I don't think, but if you tell me that,  
23 I'll believe you. You can't take the existing  
24 road that's here -- and if I'm going to give you  
25 property on the south side of that road, you get

1 property from CDF on the north side of that  
2 road -- you can't make me believe that you can  
3 take six residences, buy our property, relocate  
4 sewer lines, water lines, natural gas lines, and  
5 all of that" -- and I'm not mad. I'm just trying  
6 to hurry -- "that you can't do that cheaper than  
7 you can take our land and let me give you that  
8 land and you build that road cheaper than you can  
9 doing this other."

10 And what I get so aggravated about is we're  
11 hard-working folks just like you are. We put in  
12 plenty of time. We work. We believe you should  
13 work, but, also, we believe that the people that  
14 we elect and the people that's stewards of our  
15 money should be good stewards of our money.  
16 Nothing against APPM or any of those guys.

17 On the east side of current 45 --

18 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: You are going to need  
19 to wrap up now, Mr. Griffin. Go ahead. You can  
20 finish.

21 MR. GRIFFIN: -- they left up two acres of  
22 property and the appraisals of their basis, oh,  
23 that doesn't affect the value of your property.  
24 I would encourage you to come up to where APPM is  
25 look to the left, and you'll see a nice pretty

1 road.

2 And I have nothing against Toyota. I did  
3 own two. I'm down to one. I like their  
4 products, but you'll see a nice straight road out  
5 to their factory. There were five other  
6 factories that never got the attention -- and,  
7 again, I'm not against Toyota, but -- never got  
8 the attention to get those people in and out that  
9 I see every day with the intersection that we  
10 had.

11 You have to be the judge, and, yes, we've  
12 not -- as he says, we've not had any cases or  
13 this or that, but what about in the future? If  
14 they take that property just so somebody can have  
15 a straight shot into their factory, but then the  
16 local people get a road crooked as a dog's hind  
17 leg to travel on, you tell me.

18 Why can't we work together? Let's vote yes  
19 on Initiative 31 and see if we can start  
20 straightening some of this mess out for the  
21 people behind us.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
23 Mr. Griffin.

24 MR. GRIFFIN: Thank you.

25 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Bernie Kelly. Bernie

1 Kelly. Is Mr. Kelly here? He had to leave. I'm  
2 sorry.

3 Dan Bishop. Mr. Bishop is from Baldwin,  
4 Mississippi, and he rises to speak for the  
5 initiative. Mr. Griffin used some of your time.

6 MR. BISHOP: Thank you.

7 My name is Dan Bishop. I live up at  
8 Baldwin. I think the gentleman who spoke before  
9 me have pretty much fleshed out the  
10 technicalities involved in Initiative 31.

11 So let me just tell you a story trying to  
12 illustrate where we are with eminent domain,  
13 especially eminent domain that takes a person's  
14 property and gives it to another private person  
15 or entity for their financial benefit.

16 I got an old thousand dollar farm truck up  
17 there at the house. Just what I need out there  
18 on the farm. Got a fuel tank in the back,  
19 trailer hitch on there, toolbox, enough dents in  
20 the side that when the bull kicks it again, it  
21 doesn't matter, you know.

22 So let's pretend I was driving that old  
23 truck down the road, and being kindhearted as I  
24 am, I picked up a hitchhiker who was walking  
25 along. And he admired my old truck.

1           He said, "You know, this is a dandy old  
2 truck." Said, "It would be a great hunting and  
3 fishing truck and all that."

4           I said, "Yes. It's just what I need out  
5 here on the farm."

6           He said, "You wouldn't sell it to me, would  
7 you?"

8           I said, "No. No. It's just what I need. I  
9 got it fixed up just like I want it. I wouldn't  
10 think about selling it."

11          We ride along a little bit farther, and he  
12 says, "I really do like your old truck."

13          I said, "Yeah. I'm glad you do. Glad you  
14 do."

15          So he reaches in his pocket and he pulls out  
16 a copy of Kelley Blue Book, and he looks up the  
17 fair market value of my old truck in his Kelley  
18 Blue Book. And he looks over at me and he says,  
19 "Kelley Blue Book says your truck is worth about  
20 a thousand dollars."

21          I said, "Yeah. That's probably about  
22 right."

23          He said, "You wouldn't sell it?"

24          "No," I said, "I wouldn't sell it. I would  
25 have to go hunt me another one, fix it all up."

1 Not interested in selling it."

2 So then the next thing he does, a mile or  
3 two down the road, he pulls a pistol out of his  
4 pocket and sticks it in my face and says, "I  
5 really like your truck. Get out."

6 So I step out on the side of the road, and  
7 he throws a thousand dollars out the window and  
8 drives off with my truck. That man didn't buy my  
9 truck. He stole my truck. And if the law can  
10 find him, he's going to jail for it. Fair market  
11 value doesn't mean a thing if you don't want to  
12 sell it.

13 And one of the sacred rights we as American  
14 citizens have is the right to own property. I  
15 bought it, I paid for it; and if I don't want to  
16 sell it, it ain't for sale.

17 Now, what Initiative 31 will do is make it  
18 more difficult for the government to take  
19 property from people who don't want to sell it.  
20 Now, it certainly won't make it impossible.  
21 There's still enough room in there they can  
22 wiggle around and do a lot, but it will make it  
23 more difficult. To take personal property from a  
24 person who doesn't want to sell it and give it to  
25 another person or individual or company so they

1 can make more money with it is just loaded with  
2 opportunities for graft and corruption.

3 Initiative 31 will help a lot. Go down to  
4 the bottom of the ballot on November 8th. Find  
5 Initiative 31 and vote yes to protect personal  
6 property values.

7 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
8 Mr. Bishop.

9 Mattie Carter. Is Miss Carter still here?  
10 There she is. She's from Rolling Fork,  
11 Mississippi, and she rises to speak for the  
12 amendment.

13 MS. CARTER: Good evening. Good evening.

14 I'm Mattie Carter. I'm from Rolling Fork,  
15 Mississippi. I am the 2011 Mississippi Farm  
16 Bureau ambassador. I'm a student at Mississippi  
17 State majoring in agriculture information science  
18 and political science with a concentration in  
19 leadership.

20 Tonight I'm asking for your support of  
21 Initiative 31 preventing eminent domain abuse. A  
22 founding American principle, the right to own  
23 private property, has set us apart since our  
24 origin. Landowners' rights incentivize  
25 production, provide security to those entitled to

1 it, and are set in place to protect our public  
2 from government overreach. However, Mississippi  
3 is one of seven states graded "F" in eminent  
4 domain reform laws.

5 As a college student I can assuredly say  
6 failure is just not acceptable. It should be  
7 used as a catalyst for change, a wake-up call, a  
8 call to action. The Mississippi Farm Bureau  
9 Federation has provided a collective voice for  
10 our citizens through recent statewide petitions  
11 resulting in its overwhelming support.  
12 Mississippians want to be protected from  
13 unnecessary property grabs by those who have an  
14 upper hand politically and financially.

15 As a young person I plan to one day soon  
16 become a property owner. I'd like to know that  
17 my investment will be protected. Because of  
18 this, I stand in support of Initiative 31 and  
19 encourage you to give Mississippi a passing  
20 grade.

21 Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Miss  
23 Carter.

24 Neal -- and I'm having trouble reading the  
25 last name. First name Neal. Come on, Neal. Can

1 you spell your last name, sir?

2 MR. HUSKISON: I don't know if I can or  
3 not.

4 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Well, you've got two  
5 minutes to figure it out.

6 MR. HUSKISON: Are you Gilbert?

7 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Yes, sir, I'm Gilbert  
8 or whatever.

9 MR. HUSKISON: I like the ad.

10 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you very much.  
11 You're recognized for two minutes to speak for  
12 the initiative.

13 MR. HUSKISON: I'm Neal Huskison from  
14 Pontotoc County.

15 The Mississippi Farm Bureau asks you to vote  
16 for Proposition 31. We don't believe that  
17 government should take private property for an  
18 individual who wants to develop it. That's all  
19 we've got to say. We don't believe in that. We  
20 don't think it's right. I've got 400 acres, by  
21 the way, in Union County, and I've got about a  
22 half acre -- well, an acre in Pontotoc County. I  
23 wish you would have come and bought it. CDF, you  
24 missed me. I'm mad as hack about that. I would  
25 have sold it, but I'm telling you we don't

1 believe you have a right to take private property  
2 and give it to an individual to develop it.

3 That's all I've got to say. Nothing more.

4 One of the Founding Fathers in the constitution  
5 said when private property rights are violated,  
6 tyranny commence. Tyranny and anarchy begin.  
7 Property must be secured, or liberty will be  
8 gone.

9 I believe that. I love development. I want  
10 folks to have jobs, but I think we ought to find  
11 a way to do it in a sane manner.

12 Thank you.

13 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you,  
14 Mr. Huskison.

15 Is there anyone else would like to speak for  
16 or against the amendment?

17 Yes, sir, Mr. Sowell. If you would, give  
18 your name again, please, and your city, and  
19 you're recognized for two minutes.

20 MR. SOWELL: I'm Grant Sowell, Tupelo TEA  
21 Party. I'm not as well-versed on this topic, but  
22 I did want to touch on it, because I think it has  
23 a lot of common sense when you come to think  
24 about what eminent domain is.

25 Should government be prohibited from taking

1 private property by eminent domain and then  
2 transferring it to other persons? I want to say  
3 to David Rumbarger -- I want to thank you for a  
4 lot of the things that you do, because I believe  
5 that David does a lot of things for economic  
6 development; so I respect that, and I appreciate  
7 that. I want to say that.

8 I want to say to Brandon: I'm a TEA party  
9 guy, so I'm not a big fan of Democrats, but I  
10 have to say I have to agree with everything you  
11 said earlier.

12 COMMISSIONER PRESLEY: We agree on a lot  
13 more than you think.

14 MR. SOWELL: Well, I only have a little  
15 bit of time. I'm for limited government. If you  
16 want to get the support -- and just for the  
17 record, we're not here to promote the TEA party;  
18 but if you want to get the support of the TEA  
19 party, you'll be for limited government.

20 These initiatives, where did they come from?  
21 They come from the people. They come from the  
22 people.

23 Voter identification, let me tell you, if  
24 you wanted to go get a signature, you go to a TEA  
25 party to get a voter ID signature, to get a

1 personhood signature, or to get an eminent domain  
2 signature. Why? Because we believe in freedom.  
3 We believe in life, liberty, and the pursuit of  
4 happiness. And if I buy a Coca-Cola, I can take  
5 that Coke, I can drink it, I can pour it on my  
6 head, or do whatever I want to; but I'm going to  
7 be taxed one time for it.

8 If I buy some property, they are going to  
9 hit me up every year for that property. I'm  
10 already ticked off about that. Now you want to  
11 come and take that property? Something just  
12 doesn't seem right about it, you know.

13 So the question is this: What if I say  
14 "no"? What if -- like the gentleman said, what  
15 if the price just doesn't fit me, your fair  
16 market value? What if that doesn't suit me?  
17 Maybe it's not a gun to the head, but what  
18 happens? Do I get removed from my land? Do I  
19 get arrested? That seems un-American.

20 That's all I've got to say. I'm for eminent  
21 domain.

22 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Grant.

23 Anyone else would like to speak for or  
24 against the amendment? Yes, ma'am.

25 MR. HUSKISON: I might could spell my name

1 now.

2 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: H-U-S-T-I-S-O-N, I  
3 think.

4 Yes, ma'am. Would you come to the mic,  
5 please, ma'am. How are you doing? And if you'll  
6 speak in the mic where she can make sure she  
7 hears you. If you speak from the back, she can't  
8 hear you. If you would, give your name and city,  
9 please.

10 MS. WILLARD: My name is Betty Willard.  
11 I'm from Tupelo, Mississippi.

12 Some time ago I bought a piece of property.  
13 It was for an investment. It's 31 acres. Since  
14 there is -- of course, you know that the law is  
15 that you have to give the government 50 feet from  
16 the road on your property. Well, I have  
17 Tombigbee as an invasive neighbor. He's put  
18 telephones all along the road on my property and  
19 has abused my property. Comes on and vandalizes  
20 it, cuts -- you know, tears down a fence line,  
21 you know, cuts trees on it. He cut a tree that  
22 was a very rare tree. It was a chestnut tree.  
23 And most of the chestnut tree were killed, as you  
24 know, during the maple tree blight. He's got --  
25 he has telephone poles along the north side of my

1 property. He has no right there, but he's got  
2 them anyway; and he intends to stay. And he's  
3 referring to my property as his right of way. He  
4 hasn't given me any money, but he refers to it as  
5 his right of way.

6 And I think that not only the government  
7 should not have the right to buy property and  
8 sell it to someone else, but, also, I don't think  
9 the property -- the government should have the  
10 right to come on our property and vandalize it  
11 and not feel like that they have to pay for it or  
12 make any kind of retribution.

13 Thank you.

14 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Ms.  
15 Willard. Thank you, Betty.

16 Any other comments?

17 UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Randy Kelly in the  
18 back came in.

19 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Randy? Come on. I'm  
20 sorry. I couldn't see you back there. If you  
21 would give your name and your address, please, or  
22 city.

23 MR. KELLY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

24 My name is Vernon R. Kelly. I'm from Three  
25 Rivers in Pontotoc, Mississippi, and I appreciate

1 the opportunity to speak tonight against Item 31  
2 on the initiative.

3 I'm not against private property owners. In  
4 fact, I, like my good friend Commissioner  
5 Brandon, cherish the rights of private property  
6 like my good friends Neal Huskison, but this is a  
7 flawed piece of initiative. Extremely flawed.

8 And I'm going to explain that to you  
9 briefly, and from hearing the people talk, it  
10 doesn't solve what you're up here wanting to get  
11 solved. The smoke and mirrors that it's going to  
12 prevent eminent domain are absolutely erroneous.

13 Look at the initiative. Exxon Oil still can  
14 take your house and your farm and put a pipeline  
15 through it. Tennessee Gas can do it. You can  
16 run a railroad by a private rail company and take  
17 your home. You can take your home for a school.  
18 You can take your home by MDOT for a road.  
19 Doesn't solve any of that. It doesn't even  
20 address the real issue that the people in  
21 Mississippi have the right to be addressed  
22 related to eminent domain, and that is give cost  
23 to restore my property, replacement. You can buy  
24 my house today. It's 2120 Country Club Road.  
25 It's built in 1972. It will be appraised and

1 give me depreciated value for that property. I  
2 could not replace that house for \$100,000 within  
3 what they give it to me for. That's not right.  
4 That's the real issue with eminent domain. It's  
5 not been misused in this state. We haven't took  
6 private property to sell and bring in Walmart.  
7 It's been used for economic development. This  
8 initiative allows the taking of property, as  
9 always, excluding what David Rumbarger does best,  
10 economic development.

11 Let the legislature draft a bill, not a  
12 constitutional amendment, that doesn't have the  
13 influence of public utility companies, private  
14 corporations, and all of this, that protects the  
15 people in Mississippi, but a bill that can be  
16 amended to make sure it's right and does what the  
17 people in Mississippi need to allow economic  
18 development yet treat the people fairly. This  
19 doesn't do it; and if you vote for it, you're  
20 voting for something that will not solve what you  
21 want.

22 It's been said that 43 states have passed  
23 this and it hasn't hurt their economic  
24 development. Number one, it didn't become an  
25 issue until 2005. Think about that. In that

1 short period, the 43 states have passed it, do we  
2 even have a clue how it's hurt the impact of  
3 economic development? The answer is simply no.

4 I know this: In the Toyota project, we  
5 competed against 27 states. Obviously, a lot of  
6 those have passed this eminent domain. We won  
7 and we didn't have it. If we hadn't of had  
8 eminent domain, as I think I was told when I had  
9 another public hearing -- I apologize -- we had  
10 one acre in the middle of that owned by a church  
11 disbanded in 1921 according to the Union County  
12 Baptist Association. How do you buy that? How  
13 do you get clear deed of title? How do you bring  
14 a billion dollar industry in with that kind of  
15 legislation? Eminent domain shouldn't be used to  
16 mistreat people, but you shouldn't handcuff this  
17 state that is 50th in the nation in economic  
18 development where they can take your home, they  
19 can take your land for every private use you want  
20 to run a railroad track right through the middle  
21 of your house, but you can't do it to create  
22 4,000 jobs.

23 I ask you to vote no against Initiative 31,  
24 not because I'm for taking people's property,  
25 because it is a horrible initiative that does not

1 meet what you've been told and the people of this  
2 state have been led to believe. It doesn't stop  
3 eminent domain. It handcuffs this state for  
4 future development.

5 Thank you.

6 SECRETARY HOSEMANN: Thank you, Mr. Kelly.

7 Anyone else would like to speak? I want to  
8 thank each of you for coming tonight and  
9 participating in Mississippi democracy. Three  
10 critical issues will be on the ballot. I expect  
11 all of y'all will go vote. Get your neighbor,  
12 talk about it at church, talk about it on the  
13 weekend, at the football games coming up -- I'll  
14 be glad when that weather gets here -- talk about  
15 it everywhere.

16 This is what we're about. This is the  
17 freedom of speech for 200 years. I would  
18 encourage you to exercise that freedom of speech  
19 with each of your neighbors and each of your  
20 friends so that we have an informed voter when we  
21 make our decision on November the 8th.

22 Thank you so much for coming tonight. We'll  
23 adjourn, and I appreciate so much everyone's  
24 participation.

25 (HEARING CONCLUDED AT 7:53 P.M.)

1 CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

2 I, SHAUNA W. STANFORD, Certified  
3 Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for  
4 the State of Mississippi at large, hereby certify  
5 that the foregoing pages contain a full, true, and  
6 correct transcript of the proceedings as taken by  
7 me at the time and place heretofore stated in the  
8 aforementioned matter and later reduced to  
9 typewritten form by me to the best of my skill and  
10 ability.

11 I further certify that I placed the  
12 witness under oath to truthfully answer all  
13 questions in this matter under the authority  
14 vested in me by the State of Mississippi.

15 I further certify that I am not in the  
16 employ of or related to any counsel or party in  
17 this matter and have no interest, monetary or  
18 otherwise, as to the final outcome of this  
19 proceeding.

20 WITNESS MY SIGNATURE AND SEAL, this the  
21 22nd day of August, 2011.

22 \_\_\_\_\_  
23 SHAUNA W. STANFORD, CSR  
CSR NO. 1380

24 My Commission Expires:  
25 April 12, 2012