

RE: PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDING
INITIATIVE MEASURE 42
INITIATIVE MEASURE 42A

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Jackie Dole Sherrill Community Center
300 E. 5th Street
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401
On Tuesday, September 1, 2015
at 5:30 p.m.

*REPORTED BY: SHARRON F. ALLEN, CSR, RPR
CSR NO. 1144*

1 *MR. HOSEMANN:* I'd like to first of
2 all welcome everyone this evening to
3 Hattiesburg, Jackie Dole Sherrill Community
4 Center. We have been having these public
5 forums around the state of Mississippi. I
6 see some familiar faces here, and we're
7 excited to have you.

8 I want to go over just a second about
9 what we're doing. Can you hear me better? Is
10 that better? How's that?

11 I want to go over just a minute on how
12 we're going to conduct tonight's public forum
13 with you. The first thing we want to do is --
14 where's our flag? Do we have a flag? We've
15 lost our flag.

16 The first thing we want to do is
17 acknowledge Mr. Clint Martin. Mr. Martin is a
18 member of the Tuskegee Red Tails, and he
19 fought in our World War II, and he's sitting
20 in here with us today.

21 Mr. Martin, if you'd say hello to the
22 people. He now is an artist, and some of his
23 work is on display at the rear on our podium.

24 Our public hearings are conducted
25 throughout the state of Mississippi at the

1 request and the instructions of the
2 Mississippi Legislature. Mississippi has had
3 four previous constitutional amendments.
4 Those four previous constitutional amendments
5 were term limits, which failed at the ballot;
6 personhood, which failed; voter ID, which
7 passed; and imminent domain, which passed.
8 And the percentages of those votes were
9 different each and every time.

10 The public pays attention to amending
11 their constitution, and that's what we're
12 about tonight.

13 we will have transcribed tonight all of
14 the statements that are made, and so we would
15 request you not to say anything you don't want
16 in the public domain. So don't get up and say
17 anything nasty. we will solicit public
18 comment. we will have individuals speaking
19 for and against Amendment 42 and 42A.

20 The amendments to the Constitution
21 started with number 1. And of course each and
22 every one are sent to the Secretary of State's
23 office. They are then given to the attorney
24 general, who writes the ballot title. In this
25 case there was some litigation over the ballot

1 title. Then once that's resolved, the ballot
2 title is resolved, then it goes out after the
3 requisite number of signatures. And I think
4 it was 107,000 had to be signed by the five
5 different Congressional districts in order to
6 get this on the ballot.

7 Once that was accomplished, the
8 Mississippi Legislature met and decided to do
9 a competing amendment. So for the first time
10 in the history of our state, since 1817, we
11 have two competing amendments on the ballot in
12 November. Those two competing amendments are
13 numbered 42 and 42A.

14 We also want to acknowledge with respect
15 particularly the members of the Mississippi
16 Highway Patrol who keep us safe tonight and
17 are standing in the back and deserve applause.

18 We will start tonight. And once the for
19 and against is completed, we will ask you to
20 come to the podium, each of you who have
21 signed up. If you have not signed up to
22 speak, please see Lea Anne Brandon, who's in
23 the back, and sign up to speak. Here she is;
24 she's come up to the front here. See her, and
25 you will be given time. We will alternate for

1 and against until we've run out of one or the
2 other. And then everybody who wants to speak
3 will be given the opportunity to speak
4 tonight. Again, it will be recorded, and you
5 can look for it on our website.

6 So without further ado, we'll start with
7 the oral presentations of our two groups.
8 Mr. Jarrius Adams is speaking on behalf of 42.

9 You were in Jackson, weren't you,
10 Jarrius?

11 *MR. ADAMS:* I was.

12 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Yeah, I thought so.
13 You did a good job.

14 And Russ Latino is here and will be
15 speaking on behalf of 42A and opposed -- they
16 will each be opposed to the other.

17 So we'll start. Each of them has up to
18 ten minutes to speak for, and so we will start
19 with 42, which is Mr. Adams, who rises to
20 speak on behalf of Amendment 42 to the
21 Mississippi Constitution.

22 Mr. Adams.

23 *MR. ADAMS:* I want to thank you all
24 for the invitation to speak here today. My
25 name is Jarrius Adams, and I'm here today in

1 support of Initiative 42 for better schools.

2 I am a 2015 graduate of Hattiesburg High
3 School, and I am honored to be this year's
4 National Speech and Debate Association student
5 of the year.

6 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* All
7 right.

8 *MR. ADAMS:* Now, I have been blessed
9 by the opportunities given to me. I had
10 great teachers and a great speech coach.
11 But for every one of me, there are thousands
12 of public school students who are not so
13 lucky. There are thousands of students who
14 struggle every day in schools that lack the
15 resources to make them successful.

16 I think we would all agree that every
17 child in Mississippi has a fundamental right
18 to a free and adequate public education. That
19 means safe and modern buildings; classrooms
20 that don't leak when it rains; up-to-date
21 computers, technology, and lab equipment;
22 enough textbooks for every child to take home;
23 smaller class sizes; more college prep
24 classes; and safe buses.

25 In 1997 state lawmakers passed a law

1 called the Mississippi Adequate Education
2 Program to adequately fund K through 12
3 education in every school district in our
4 state. Yet, since 1997 lawmakers have
5 repeatedly broken their own law and have
6 severely underfunded every single school in
7 Mississippi.

8 The results are clear. Local school
9 districts have been shortchanged. Local
10 property taxes have gone up. Too many schools
11 have too few teachers, outdated textbooks,
12 antiquated facilities, unsafe buses, and a
13 lack of computers.

14 The underfunding of schools is hurting
15 our state's ability to attract companies to
16 move here, and our students are not learning
17 the skills companies are looking for. The
18 result is hurting our ability to grow and
19 attract good-paying jobs.

20 In one school district facilities are in
21 such need of repair that teachers have to put
22 down wooden pallets every time it rains so
23 students can walk to class. In my own school
24 district in Hattiesburg, classrooms are too
25 cramped because we don't have the money to

1 afford new teachers. And right here in
2 Hattiesburg and Forrest County, schools have
3 been shortchanged \$39 million since 2008.
4 That's enough money for 114 new teachers for
5 ten years. Let me say that again. That's
6 enough money for 114 new teachers for ten
7 years.

8 You know, it's stories like these all
9 across our state that harm our kids and scare
10 companies away from doing business in
11 Mississippi and eventually costs us jobs.

12 Now, we can do better. We can have
13 better schools, better jobs, and a better
14 future for our kids and our state.

15 So some of you may ask, "what is
16 Initiative 42?" You see, nearly 200,000
17 Mississippians from every county and both
18 political parties signed petitions to put
19 Initiative 42 on this year's ballot. This is
20 a people's movement. Mothers, fathers,
21 teachers, business leaders, Democrats,
22 Republicans -- they all understand that
23 underfunding our schools damages our state's
24 economy and our future.

25 Initiative 42 will require lawmakers to

1 adequately fund Mississippi public schools
2 under the 1997 law they passed. This will
3 help every school.

4 Now, opponents of Initiative 42 will
5 tell you it means that one judge in Hinds
6 County will decide how much money our schools
7 would get. That's not true. All the judge
8 would do is ensure that lawmakers are spending
9 the money on education as required under the
10 law. Local school boards, you, your community
11 get the funding and set the priorities. This
12 gives you local control and helps you keep
13 property taxes down.

14 Now, Initiative 42 would not require
15 raising taxes or cutting the state budget,
16 period. As stated on every petition signed by
17 nearly 200,000 Mississippians last year,
18 funding can be phased in over seven years
19 using general fund revenue from the state
20 budget. Those revenues have grown an average
21 of 4.8 percent each year for the last ten
22 years. Using just a quarter of projected
23 future growth amounts to \$37.5 million per
24 year. At that rate it would only take seven
25 years to fully fund the MAEP.

1 Now, it's time to start giving every
2 Mississippi child the education they deserve.
3 All schools should have sufficient funding to
4 provide each and every child with a 21st
5 Century education so they can have the tools
6 needed to attend college or technical school
7 and the skills needed to compete for 21st
8 Century jobs.

9 Better schools will help our state grow.
10 When looking to relocate, companies are
11 increasingly looking for a highly educated
12 work force. Better schools will attract new
13 businesses, help drive economic growth, and
14 strengthen communities. Better schools will
15 lead to better jobs and higher wages.

16 Now, in November you can decide whether
17 to increase the funding for our kids or allow
18 lawmakers to continue to underfund our
19 schools. 42 is an investment in the future of
20 our children. 42 is an Investment in our
21 state. 42 means better schools, better jobs,
22 higher wages, and more economic growth.

23 Now, I urge you to study the facts.
24 Visit the 42 website at
25 42forbetterschools.org. When you go there,

1 you can see exactly how much your local
2 schools are underfunded. Look it up. Then
3 take out your property tax bill and look at
4 that. They're related to each other.

5 But we can fix the imbalance with 42.
6 Talk to your friends and neighbors.
7 Democrats, Republicans -- it doesn't matter
8 what party they're in. Everyone in
9 Mississippi understands our kids have been
10 shortchanged. Our kids have been
11 shortchanged, and our economy has been
12 shortchanged. 42 is our chance to really make
13 a difference.

14 Thank you.

15 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Adams.

16 Mr. Russ Latino is opposed to 42.

17 *MR. LATINO:* Thank y'all for coming
18 out tonight. I know you've got a lot of
19 options for things that you could be doing
20 other than being in a room talking about
21 politics, but this is something that matters
22 an awful lot.

23 I appreciate Mr. Adams. He and I
24 disagree, but I know he's passionate about
25 what he's saying, and I don't begrudge anybody

1 who is passionate about our schools and about
2 the future of our state.

3 But there's a false choice that's been
4 presented in this debate. And I've done five
5 of these now, and I've heard the exact same
6 speech given five times by four different
7 people. And at some level we've got to look
8 at it and just have a moment of honesty, a
9 moment of genuine conversation that says you
10 can be against 42 and in favor of public
11 schools, and you can want the best for our
12 kids and be against 42. It is a false choice.

13 There is not a person in this room,
14 whether they are opposed to 42 or in favor of
15 42, that doesn't want to see schools better in
16 Mississippi.

17 I'm a product of public schools. My
18 wife is a product of public schools. We've
19 got two children who are products of public
20 schools. And in every single one of these
21 forums, the person opposite of me has gotten
22 up and railed against politicians and
23 lobbyists. Well, I'm not a politician and I'm
24 not a lobbyist. I'm a guy who believes in
25 limited government. I'm a guy who believes in

1 separation of powers. I'm a guy that believes
2 when we start to think about doing things like
3 amending our Constitution, that words actually
4 matter.

5 The presentation that's been given at
6 all of these cities by the folks who are in
7 favor of 42 is a good presentation. It's an
8 emotional presentation. It tugs at the
9 heartstrings. I get it. There are a lot of
10 people who are frustrated. There are a lot of
11 people who want to see their kids in better
12 schools. I get it. But the reality is that
13 absent from the conversation is any discussion
14 of what the amendment to the Constitution
15 actually says.

16 There are an awful lot of people in this
17 room who have been convinced or who had
18 petitions handed to them and were told, "Do
19 you want to fully fund education without
20 raising taxes?" That was the pitch. You
21 weren't presented with a copy of the amendment
22 and said, "Look closely at this. Read this
23 closely."

24 As a product of public schools, I had
25 great history teachers that taught me that the

1 Constitution is not something that should be
2 trifled with lightly. They taught me that it
3 is the framework for our government. Right?
4 And that we divide powers between the judicial
5 branch and the legislative branch and
6 executive branch, and that that division
7 matters for preserving the rights of everyday
8 average people.

9 And what we're talking about right now
10 is something that is unprecedented. The
11 amendment doesn't just say that the judiciary
12 will be able to have a check on the
13 legislature.

14 You all have paper in front of you. And
15 if you look at those papers, it will show you
16 what the current provision of the Constitution
17 says and what the proposed amendment says.
18 And if you look at the current provision of
19 the Constitution, what you'll see is that the
20 Constitution gives to the legislature
21 policymaking power over education. And that
22 makes sense because the legislature has always
23 in every state in the union in our country
24 been given the power to legislate, to enact
25 policy. why is that? Because it's the

1 largest body in the state. It is the people's
2 body. It's 174 members between the
3 Mississippi Senate and the House of
4 Representatives. And they are not Jackson
5 politicians. They are people who live in your
6 community. And you vote for those people, and
7 you have the right to go and tell them, "Hey,
8 I don't like what you're doing." And you have
9 the right to vote against them, and you have
10 the right to run against them.

11 But the legislature has always had the
12 policymaking power. And if you look at
13 section 201, it says "The legislature, by
14 general law, shall provide for the
15 establishment, maintenance, and support of a
16 free system of public schools, subject to the
17 conditions and limitations prescribed by that
18 legislature."

19 what does that mean? That means that
20 everything that is in our state that has to do
21 with education falls under section 201 and the
22 authority that is given to the legislature.
23 From the Mississippi Department of Education
24 all the way down to your local elementary
25 school, it's given to the legislature. They

1 set things like how many days a year you're
2 going to go to school, when kids start school.
3 They're involved in curriculum decisions,
4 setting standards. The legislature has always
5 had that power.

6 I want you to look carefully at those
7 sheets that are in front of you, at the
8 proposed amendments. Look at it. What you'll
9 see is that the legislature -- both references
10 to the legislature have been removed,
11 including the reference to "by general law."
12 And I can tell you as a guy who's a recovering
13 litigator that that matters, because general
14 law is how the Constitution gives the power to
15 the legislature to enact laws.

16 So we are removing the authority of the
17 legislature to enact laws related to
18 education. It's not simply providing a check
19 on the legislature. It's removing the
20 legislature's power. It's removing the power
21 of the people that you vote for. And somehow
22 this is going to give you more control and
23 more accountability?

24 what else does the amendment do? It
25 adds the words "adequate" and "efficient." I

1 can tell you those words are out of a focus
2 group -- right? -- because nobody in their
3 right mind would look at our education system
4 and say "I don't want an adequate and
5 efficient education." Nobody would say
6 they're against that. Right?

7 If I ask each one of you to pull out a
8 piece of paper right now and to write down
9 what does it mean for your school to have an
10 adequate and efficient education, the answers
11 would be across the spectrum. It is a
12 subjective, arbitrary thing.

13 And so then the question becomes, "Okay.
14 So who is going to get to decide what is
15 adequate and what is efficient?" And in that
16 regard this amendment creates an entirely new
17 power. This amendment says that the chancery
18 courts of the state will get to determine what
19 is adequate and what is efficient. It is a
20 power that has never been given to the
21 judiciary.

22 I know that the proponents of this thing
23 will get up and tell you that it's no
24 different than what the law currently is. If
25 that's the case, why are we passing the

1 amendment? If it's no different, why are we
2 passing the amendment? The truth is it is
3 dramatically different. We have never asked a
4 court to make policy the way we are now asking
5 this court to make policy.

6 And, yes, a single judge will be the one
7 called upon. The way it works in our state is
8 that if you sue the state of Mississippi, that
9 lawsuit gets brought in Jackson. And so one
10 of four chancellors in Jackson will get to
11 decide what is adequate and efficient for your
12 school. And that doesn't just mean that it's
13 a district that files a lawsuit. A parent
14 that doesn't like the way you're teaching in
15 your classroom can file a lawsuit against you
16 and could say that what you're doing is not
17 adequate and efficient. That could happen.
18 Look at the amendment. It doesn't limit it to
19 school districts filing lawsuits. We are
20 opening Pandora's box to address a problem.

21 You can believe that we should put more
22 money in schools and still look at this thing
23 and say on the face of it -- look at the
24 amendment itself. Look at the words itself.
25 This is not the right vehicle. This is not

1 how we get to the point of making sure that we
2 have better schools and better jobs for
3 Mississippi. It's simply not. It's shooting
4 at a fly with a shotgun.

5 You guys have seen the drug
6 commercials -- right? -- that say, you know,
7 "If you want to solve dry mouth, take X drug."
8 And then there's a laundry list of potential
9 consequences, infinite consequences. "You're
10 going to have cardiac arrest; you're going to
11 die," whatever it is. And you may look at
12 that commercial and think to yourself, "Maybe
13 I don't want to take that drug. Maybe I could
14 just drink a glass of water."

15 There are things that could be done in
16 the state right now to address our education
17 problems. This is not the right answer. The
18 right answer is not trusting that a judge in
19 Jackson is going to have the best interest of
20 your school and your child at heart when a
21 lawyer like me stands up in front of them and
22 argues as to what it means for a school to be
23 adequate and efficient. It's simply not the
24 answer.

25 You'll hear this said probably in

1 response -- and this is an odd debate
2 format -- but you'll hear it said that the
3 only way the legislature will end up in front
4 of a court is if it breaks the law. Okay.
5 Having practiced law for ten years, I can
6 promise you -- having defended clients for ten
7 years, I can promise you people end up in
8 court all the time who did absolutely nothing
9 wrong. You do not have to be right to sue
10 someone. You do not have to be right to sue
11 someone.

12 Let me say this too: This notion that
13 the legislature broke the law -- you may be
14 unhappy with what the legislature has done,
15 but this has been decided. The legislature
16 did not break the law. The legislature has
17 always had a constitutional right to
18 appropriate funds. And one legislature under
19 law has never been able to bind another
20 legislature when it comes to the appropriation
21 of funds. The legislature has not broken the
22 law. That's a fact. That's been decided.

23 And it's also a fact that you very well
24 could end up in front of a judge having never
25 done anything wrong. And it's also a fact

1 that the amendment itself cuts the legislature
2 entirely out of the process. So there's a lot
3 of misinformation out there.

4 But I want to say one thing about the
5 motivation for this before we jump to 42A.
6 Yes, MAEP was passed in 1997. There was a
7 Democrat House, a Democrat Senate, and a
8 Democrat governor. And for ten years
9 Democrats had control of the legislature. And
10 then for 14 years after MAEP, Democrats had
11 control of the House of Representatives. They
12 didn't fully fund education. They didn't fund
13 the MAEP formula. Right? There were no
14 lawsuits. Governor Musgrove wasn't filing a
15 lawsuit then asking for \$240 million from the
16 state. Nobody was pushing initiatives then.

17 Republicans get in the legislature for
18 the first time since Reconstruction, and
19 funding has actually gone up by \$300 million.
20 Last year 66 percent of new revenue got put
21 towards education. And now it comes up. Why
22 is it coming up now and not in the 14 years
23 the Democrats were in control? Ask yourself
24 that question. Who is pushing this thing?
25 Who is behind this thing? Who are the

1 operatives who are working on this thing, and
2 where do they align themselves? The reality
3 is that there are people who are upset with
4 the fact that Republicans are in power, and
5 they found an emotional issue. They found an
6 emotional issue because they cannot beat them
7 at the ballot box.

8 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* No.

9 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Latino.

10 We have a couple of guests I want to
11 acknowledge tonight before we get on 42A.

12 First, Representative Larry Byrd is
13 here, I think. Would you wave for us, please,
14 Representative Byrd? Thank you for coming
15 tonight.

16 And then we have the honorable mayor who
17 has come in and joined us. Mayor DuPree is
18 here in the back.

19 Are there any other elected officials
20 here that I missed? I recognized those two.

21 There's one. Yes, sir. Introduce
22 yourself, please.

23 *MR. MARSHALL:* Charles Marshall,
24 Forrest County Board of Supervisors,
25 District 2.

1 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Nice to meet you,
2 Mr. Marshall. Welcome. We're glad you're
3 here.

4 Yes, sir.

5 *MR. JONES:* Bill Jones, member of the
6 State Board of Education.

7 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Nice to see you,
8 Mr. Jones.

9 *MR. JONES:* How do I get to speak?

10 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Check in with this lady
11 right here. We've got a list. If you'll
12 give her your name here -- Lea Anne
13 Brandon -- she will give you a time to
14 speak.

15 Okay. Next we want to move -- as I
16 mentioned to you, there are two constitutional
17 initiatives -- 42, which was just discussed,
18 and 42A, which was the legislature's proposal
19 concerning education.

20 So, Mr. Latino, if you want to start on
21 42A, please, sir.

22 *MR. LATINO:* And I know there's a
23 certain art to this, but it's odd to sit
24 down and hop back up. It's just an odd
25 debate format, to be honest.

1 I will say for Mr. Adams's sake, though,
2 when I was practicing law, I would have loved
3 to have been both first and the last one to
4 speak. So there's value in that for you.
5 Congratulations on that.

6 42A. 42A has been called by the
7 proponents of 42 a dirty trick. Okay? And
8 the essence of the argument is that never
9 before in the history of the state has the
10 legislature put an alternative on the ballot.
11 Let me provide some context to that, first of
12 all.

13 We didn't have a ballot initiative
14 process until 1992. As the Secretary of State
15 indicated, this is only the fifth one that's
16 ever been put on the ballot. And our
17 Constitution affords the legislature the right
18 to propose an alternative. And in this case I
19 actually believe that it was their duty to
20 propose an alternative. I'm not an apologist
21 for the legislature. The truth is that there
22 are things that the legislature does that
23 makes me scratch my head. Certainly there are
24 instances of waste that we can point to that
25 the legislature has engaged in that make you

1 scratch your head. I get it.

2 But on this I think the legislature has
3 a duty to propose an alternative, and here's
4 the reason why: Because I think the dirty
5 trick was in selling people an amendment that
6 was supposed to fully fund education when the
7 amendment doesn't say anything about funding
8 or MAEP in it. There's not a single reference
9 to funding. There's not a single reference to
10 MAEP in the amendment.

11 So in this instance, when the
12 legislature comes forward and it proposes an
13 alternative, it serves this function: If you
14 just look at the amendment itself, you may
15 look at it and all those focus group words and
16 say "adequate" and "efficient" and
17 "fundamental right," and you can see a
18 reference to the courts, you may not think
19 about what's being cut out of it. You may not
20 stop and think to yourself, "Isn't the
21 legislature normally in charge of policy?"

22 what 42A does is to remind you that for
23 the entirety of Mississippi's history and our
24 country's history, when it came to policy
25 formation, that was a legislative function.

1 It creates a contrast, and it's an important
2 contrast.

3 And I want to say this, too, about the
4 words "adequate" and "efficient." And you'll
5 have to forgive me for jumping from Point A to
6 Point B. I really honestly just wanted to
7 have a conversation, and so I didn't bring a
8 talk or anything.

9 The words "adequate" and "efficient"
10 aren't defined in the amendment itself, but
11 there is an initiative petition that was put
12 together by the guy who wrote the amendment.
13 Now, he chose not to put in the amendment that
14 it was to fully fund education. He could have
15 done that easily if that was the intention.
16 But he did put in the initiative petition a
17 reference to what he thinks it means to be
18 adequate and efficient. And there is a
19 reference to MAEP as a minimum standard of
20 adequacy.

21 So what does that mean? That means that
22 even if a court -- and a court is not bound to
23 do this -- but even if a court looks at the
24 initiative petition and says, "I'm going to
25 treat this as if it was part of the

1 Constitution," that judge still has the
2 ability and discretion to say what is adequate
3 over and above MAEP, and it's not limited to
4 issues of funding.

5 The word "efficient" essentially says
6 this: That it enables us to compete with
7 surrounding states -- and I quote -- "among
8 other things." Well, none of us would say
9 that we don't want to compete with surrounding
10 states. The question is whether you want a
11 judge in Jackson that none of you get to vote
12 for making a decision about what it means to
13 compete favorably with other states and how we
14 get there. I would say no to that. I would
15 say I'd rather the guy that I vote for get to
16 make those decisions, because I think there's
17 more accountability in that, and I think
18 that's the way we've always done things.

19 There's also going to be a discussion
20 about what the legislature has and hasn't done
21 in terms of funding. One of the phrases that
22 comes up over and over again is that if you've
23 got a vehicle, you've got to put gas in the
24 car to make it go. I get that. I get that.

25 In 1970, adjusted for inflation, we were

1 spending \$2,861 a student. 1970. That's
2 adjusted for just inflation. Actual 1970
3 dollars were 400 and something. Okay? In
4 2012 we were spending \$8500 a student. So we
5 have nearly quadrupled spending in 40 years.

6 Since 2012, as I said, we've added \$300
7 million to the coffers. Last year 110 million
8 of 150-something in additional revenue went
9 toward a teacher pay raise. We're spending
10 more money than we've ever spent before,
11 \$2.5 billion this fiscal year out of our state
12 general fund on education.

13 So we're looking at a situation where
14 we've actually quadrupled spending, continue
15 to increase spending, spending actually more
16 revenue as an increased -- or more of the
17 additional revenue than what the supposed
18 phase-in suggests. It's not fair to say that
19 the legislature is not putting gas in the
20 tank.

21 And then we look at what we're getting
22 in terms of results. NAEP scores are largely
23 stagnant for the last four years. I'm not
24 blaming that on any educator. I know you guys
25 work hard; and I know you're committed, or

1 else you wouldn't be here tonight. I get
2 that. But at some level, if we're ever
3 actually going to not be 50th, we've got to
4 realize that money may be a part of the
5 solution, but it is not the entire solution.
6 Politics are not the solution. We will never
7 be anything but at the bottom if we don't
8 start to look around and say, "How can we
9 change culture? What can we do differently?
10 How do we innovate? How do we compete
11 favorably with other states without just
12 saying it's all about dollars?" because it's
13 not all about the dollars.

14 Look at Utah. Utah spends \$6600 a
15 student, so two grand less than what
16 Mississippi is spending. And they're in the
17 top ten in every category of the NAEP. It's
18 possible to have incredible results and to be
19 frugal about doing it. It's possible to do
20 that.

21 I'm not suggesting again that you can't
22 be in favor of increased funding, but I am
23 suggesting that it's a bit of a myth to say
24 that we're not putting gas in the tank.

25 At the end of the day every single

1 person in this room has an extremely important
2 decision. That decision is whether we
3 fundamentally alter our system of government.
4 I know there are -- I can see it -- that there
5 are people frustrated in the room. I get it.
6 But this is not the way to do it. You've been
7 presented with a false choice.

8 Every single person in this room
9 teaches -- or a lot of people in this room --
10 I shouldn't say every single person because I
11 know in past venues it's primarily been
12 educators. But I'm assuming we've got a lot
13 of educators here, people who have invested
14 their lives in young people. And one of the
15 things that you're teaching those young people
16 is not just how to do a math problem or not
17 just to memorize something for a test; you're
18 actually trying to teach those young people
19 how to think. You're imparting in them the
20 idea that they can be unique individuals who
21 can think for themselves and do for
22 themselves.

23 And I know there's a lot of pressure on
24 you right now, and you've been told a lot of
25 things about what this amendment will and

1 won't do from people that you may trust. I
2 encourage you to read the amendment for
3 yourself. Put those same skills that you're
4 trying to give your students to work now and
5 make an informed decision -- not based on
6 emotion, not based on rhetoric; based on the
7 words that will become a part of our
8 Constitution and your logical ability. I
9 trust that everybody in this room can do that
10 and that we'll have the right decision.

11 I thank you for listening to me, and I
12 appreciate y'all's time in being here tonight.

13 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Latino.

14 Jarrius, we are ready for you to speak
15 up to ten minutes opposed to 42A.

16 We've still got voter ID. I hear one of
17 those children.

18 *MR. ADAMS:* Now, Mr. Latino, I
19 apologize for my incorrect statement.

20 Mr. Latino is not a politician. He's
21 simply a supporter of 42A, just like I'm a
22 supporter of Initiative 42.

23 Now, before I begin, I would like to
24 respond to a few issues that Mr. Latino
25 brought up.

1 First, about the language in the
2 Constitution. Now, this issue of the
3 seven-year phase-in plan is not stated in the
4 Constitution, but there is nowhere in the
5 Constitution where it says that they have to
6 fully fund the MAEP in one year. Now, we have
7 given them a responsible option, but if the
8 lawmakers have a better idea that doesn't
9 require raising taxes or cutting our state
10 budget, then we're all for it.

11 Secondly, Mr. Latino keeps saying 42 is
12 going to take away power from the legislature.
13 That is not true. Can't we all agree that the
14 legislature is a part of the state? The
15 legislature would still have appropriation
16 power under 42.

17 Now, lastly, he keeps bringing up this
18 term "adequate." Now, you know what?
19 Sometimes I get confused too. Because I'm not
20 an attorney; I'm not. But an adequate school
21 has the resources needed to be successful.
22 You all know this. Without fully funding the
23 MAEP, we don't have adequate schools.

24 You know, we're not asking for movie
25 theaters. We're not asking for bowling

1 alleys. We're not asking for luxuries. We're
2 just asking for the basics in schools so our
3 kids can be successful.

4 42 fully funding public education in
5 Mississippi means better schools, better jobs,
6 higher wages, and more economic growth.

7 Now, ladies and gentlemen, do not be
8 fooled by the legislative alternative. As
9 Mr. Latino told you, never before in the
10 history of Mississippi has the state ever
11 thwarted the people's will by placing an
12 alternative to an initiative on a general
13 election ballot. It didn't happen until
14 nearly 200,000 Mississippians signed petitions
15 saying they wanted a constitutional amendment
16 to force the lawmakers to obey the law they
17 passed in 1997 to fully fund our public
18 schools.

19 Now, 42A was placed on the November
20 ballot by lawmakers for one purpose and one
21 purpose only -- to divide the supporters of
22 public education so that Initiative 42 would
23 not get the percentage of votes needed to
24 amend our state's Constitution. In other
25 words, it is a trick, a sleight-of-hand

1 deception. Ladies and gentlemen, do not fall
2 for it.

3 Voters will have two choices when they
4 enter the voting booth on November 3rd. The
5 first choice is whether to amend the state's
6 Constitution. Now, the Constitution needs to
7 be amended because it gives lawmakers, like he
8 said, control over public school funding with
9 no accountability. Voters who want that
10 accountability for fully funding our schools
11 must vote yes for this constitutional
12 amendment.

13 Now, the second choice is between
14 Initiative 42 and the legislative alternative,
15 42A. Again, voters who want better public
16 schools should vote for Initiative 42, not
17 42A. It's easy if you just remember that 42A
18 stands for 42 against, as in against public
19 education.

20 The authors of 42A did not put it on the
21 ballot and hope that it would pass. They did
22 it to split the vote so that neither amendment
23 is adopted. In fact, I didn't hear Mr. Latino
24 give me any reason why I should vote for 42A.
25 He just bashed Initiative 42 the whole time.

1 By putting 42A on the ballot, lawmakers
2 simply thumbed their nose at the
3 Mississippians who signed the petition for 42.
4 Ladies and gentlemen, do not be fooled. 42A
5 keeps the status quo. 42A allows lawmakers to
6 continue to underfund our schools. 42A is
7 against adequate funding. 42A says yes to
8 unsafe buses, yes to leaky roofs, yes to less
9 training for teachers. It does nothing to
10 improve our schools. In fact, 42A provides no
11 additional money for our public education here
12 in Mississippi. Only Initiative 42 will hold
13 our lawmakers accountable to fully fund our
14 public schools like they promised.

15 Now, lawmakers will tell you some tall
16 tales. The politicians in Jackson and the
17 lobbyists and supporters of 42A will tell you
18 that throwing more money at public schools
19 will not solve our problems; but by not
20 following its own 1997 law, they've never
21 given their own plan a chance to succeed.

22 Now, supporters of 42A, the politicians
23 in Jackson, and their lobbyists will tell you
24 that one judge in Hinds County will decide how
25 much money our school districts will get. The

1 fact is that one judge in Hinds County has
2 never had the final say on anything that one
3 side or the other didn't like. The
4 nine-member State Supreme Court has always had
5 the final word. But, you know, all of that is
6 irrelevant if the lawmakers would just follow
7 their own law that they passed in 1997.

8 Now, Mr. Latino keeps talking about this
9 one judge in Hinds County, this one judge in
10 Forrest County, one judge in Madison County.
11 Now, I'm just a kid, but I'm smart enough to
12 know that if you don't speed, you won't get a
13 speeding ticket.

14 Now, politicians in Jackson, their
15 lobbyists, and supporters of 42A will tell you
16 that they will have to cut the state budget or
17 raise your taxes if you force them to follow
18 their own law. But go look at your local
19 county tax bill and see how it has gone up in
20 the past ten years, all because those same
21 politicians won't do their job and follow the
22 law.

23 The money is there for our schools
24 without raising taxes or cutting the state
25 budget, and it can be done responsibly over

1 seven years.

2 You guys, it's a matter of priorities.
3 Can you believe in 2010 our lawmakers invested
4 in a company outside of Columbus, Mississippi,
5 who told them they can turn wood into
6 gasoline? Crazy. Right? Our lawmakers gave
7 that company \$75 million. And that company
8 went bankrupt, and that same \$75 million we
9 will never see again -- money that could have
10 gone to furthering our public education and
11 fully funding the MAEP. You know, it's a
12 matter of priorities.

13 Every single story those politicians in
14 Jackson, their lobbyists, and supporters of
15 42A will tell you is based on fear, using
16 scare tactics. They have no basis in fact. I
17 just want you to ask yourself: why would our
18 lawmakers work so hard to confuse us about an
19 issue as important as public education? well,
20 maybe it's because they're scared to death of
21 losing their control and their power to tell
22 you how your schools should be run. You know,
23 sometimes these politicians get confused about
24 who works for whom.

25 Now, on November 3rd you have the chance

1 to take back the control of your schools by
2 voting for Initiative 42. You have the chance
3 to tell lawmakers that you won't be fooled by
4 42A, because it is a trick. You have the
5 chance to hold those politicians, their
6 lobbyists, and the supporters of 42A
7 accountable for fully funding our public
8 schools like they promised. And you have the
9 chance to show the children of Mississippi
10 that there is nothing more important than
11 education, because better schools means better
12 jobs, higher wages, and more economic growth.

13 So on November 3rd, when you walk into
14 the voting booth, I want you to say yes to the
15 only true choice for better public schools,
16 Initiative 42.

17 Thank you.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Adams.

19 We go now to the public forum portion
20 where we have individual speakers, so I'm
21 going to invite you. Lea Anne is checking the
22 mike. So we'll give you each two to three
23 minutes to speak.

24 And we will start with Mr. Frank Yates
25 of Pearl, Mississippi, to speak for 42.

1 Mr. Yates.

2 *MR. YATES:* Good evening. It is an
3 honor to be here this evening. I want to
4 thank you for being here in support of 42.
5 I know that's why you're here.

6 This is the most important issue for the
7 future of our children that will be on the
8 November 3rd ballot, 2015; not only for our
9 children, but our children's children.

10 My name is Frank Yates. I'm a
11 grandfather of eight, three that are in public
12 school -- grade 4, 6, and 8. I'm an educator
13 and executive director of the Mississippi
14 Association of Educators.

15 I fully support Initiative 42 because it
16 helps to solve the public education funding
17 crisis -- and it is a crisis -- that we have
18 for our schools -- our local schools and our
19 local communities. Our communities cannot
20 grow unless they have good students. People
21 move away looking for good schools somewhere
22 else. They not only leave our Mississippi
23 communities, they leave Mississippi
24 altogether.

25 Last night I was in north Mississippi at

1 a meeting, and one of the persons present was
2 a librarian from a small school district. Not
3 only the librarian, but she was the librarian
4 for two schools. She's the only librarian in
5 the school district that is a certified
6 librarian as required for a school to be
7 accredited. She worked for one school three
8 days a week and another school two days a
9 week.

10 You know, there's a district that we
11 were in last week over near the river, and the
12 elementary school there had -- the library was
13 almost totally lacking of books appropriate
14 for that age. We were successful in getting
15 some community people and teachers from other
16 parts of the state to come out on this issue
17 to grant several hundred books for that school
18 so the children can have books there in their
19 library.

20 You know, if we look at our state, our
21 beloved state, we can do better than what
22 we're doing. In order for us to do that, all
23 of us need to go to the polls on November 3rd
24 and vote for Measure 42. It is a great
25 economic engine that our state needs --

1 educated people.

2 whatever resources that may be required
3 for our schools, we need to provide it to our
4 young people who won't always be young. They
5 will be like us. They will hold positions;
6 they will be judges, politicians. And, yes,
7 there will be teachers and lawyers, and they
8 will be persons who work every day. We don't
9 need to fill our prisons with our people. We
10 need them working and paying taxes in their
11 community and helping our communities.

12 So we ask you to follow us on Facebook
13 and follow us on Twitter and follow us
14 wherever we go. 42 is for the love of our
15 lives, our children.

16 Thank you.

17 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Yates.

18 Y'all watch the -- there's a cord there,
19 so be careful when you come up.

20 Ms. Oleata Lewis from Petal,
21 Mississippi, rises opposed to 42.

22 *MS. LEWIS:* Good evening. I'm not a
23 politician; I'm not a teacher; I'm not a
24 lawyer. What I am is an involved parent and
25 an active voter. And I cannot in good

1 conscience cast my vote to concede and
2 forfeit my child's education to a judge or
3 any single one person who isn't from our
4 district, who doesn't have children in our
5 district, and is not likely to be affected
6 by the decisions made wherever the power
7 stops.

8 They keep bringing up the figure 200,000
9 signatures on this petition. I believe those
10 numbers are false due to the fact that they
11 were uninformed. They were not fully made
12 aware of what that all means. Seven years?
13 My child can't wait that long -- can yours? --
14 for these benefits to be implemented. I just
15 feel that there is a lot more to this that we
16 could be informed on, and the citizens of
17 Mississippi could come together to find a
18 better way to fund and improve our children's
19 education.

20 Thank you.

21 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

22 Koedy Harper. Mr. Harper is from Laurel
23 Mississippi, and he is in favor of Initiative
24 42.

25 *MR. HARPER:* Good evening, everyone.

1 My name is Koedy Harper.

2 *MR. HOSEMANN:* The reporter can't hear
3 you.

4 *MR. HARPER:* I'm sorry. My name is
5 Koedy Harper. Thank you, Mr. Hosemann, and
6 the staff. I'm a student at the University
7 of Southern Mississippi. My major is
8 political science and environmental biology.

9 I'm not going to try to further define
10 Initiative 42 and 42A. I believe Mr. Adams
11 did a wonderful job of that. But what I do
12 want to address is the issues and concerns
13 surrounding college campuses, the students,
14 the professors, the faculty and staff, the
15 effects of what Initiative 42 will have upon
16 colleges in Mississippi and funding.

17 [COURT REPORTER NOTE: COULD NOT HEAR
18 PORTIONS OF SPEAKER'S COMMENTS AND THERE MAY
19 BE INACCURACIES]

20 Seventy percent of Mississippi students
21 are unprepared to enter college. Isn't that
22 amazing? This will lead to entering the job
23 market without any qualifications to tackle
24 economic growth and their future.

25 Excess funding going toward public

1 schools will provide an influx to junior
2 college, to high school programs such as the
3 arts, such as biology departments, which then
4 will provide passage for students to then go
5 and receive college degrees in these skills,
6 such as the biology department, such as
7 Southern Mississippi's science program, such
8 as the University of Mississippi's medical
9 program.

10 So in this fact, as a college student, a
11 senior at the University of Mississippi, I
12 fully support Initiative 42. And I can stand
13 by the fact I want just to simply provide
14 information to voters to make informed
15 decisions.

16 We have the State Legislature proposing
17 an amendment to combat a public initiative.
18 We also are making history as I speak.
19 Mississippi is not very welcoming with its
20 education program. Everyone would like to be
21 extraordinary, and we need to fully support
22 Initiative 42 and fully support our students.

23 Thank you.

24 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Harper.

25 And when you're up, Lea Anne will give

1 you about a 30-second wave here -- which she's
2 got a sign for you -- and then a stop once you
3 go too long.

4 Joseph Moia from Hattiesburg. He rises
5 in opposition to Initiative 42.

6 *MR. MOIA:* My name is Joseph Moia.
7 Good evening.

8 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* He's
9 speaking for 42.

10 *MR. HOSEMANN:* He signed up against.
11 I'm sorry.

12 *MR. MOIA:* In opposition to 42A.
13 Okay? The reason I'm in opposition to 42A
14 is, first of all, we talk about an adequate
15 education funding. The legislature funded
16 the MAEP program exactly twice in
17 Mississippi, both times during an election
18 year.

19 All right. When we talk about an
20 adequately funded education in Mississippi,
21 we're talking about an education at a C level.
22 Now, that's not what I would want for my
23 children, to be educated at a C level. I
24 taught history; I taught government; I was a
25 special ed teacher; I was an educator for 30

1 years.

2 I would not tackle a constitutional
3 amendment easily; but when the legislature
4 doesn't do its job, it's the electorate's turn
5 to take up the mantle and push forward with
6 legislation. We need to pass 42. We need to
7 defeat 42A. It's an end run around 42. It's
8 meant to confuse the electorate, and it would
9 be wise to realize that and to vote for 42.

10 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Moia.

11 Joseph Kinnan from Hattiesburg,
12 Mississippi, in support of 42.

13 *MR. KINNAN:* I was not in support of
14 42.

15 *MR. HOSEMANN:* So you are con. Well,
16 that's good, because we had him on the wrong
17 one too. So that balances. Yes, sir.
18 Please go forward.

19 *MR. KINNAN:* I'm Joe Kinnan. And my
20 wife, Cindy, and I came here with our six
21 kids in 1983 when I took over the Air Force
22 ROTC at Southern. And we have a special
23 concern -- oh, by the way, I want to thank
24 all the educators that educated at least
25 three of our children while we were here,

1 and they went on to successful careers and
2 went through college. And they learned a
3 lot in the Hattiesburg School System, and
4 we're proud of that. So we appreciate you
5 very much for that.

6 Our main concern with the 42 proposal is
7 that it will -- first of all, we don't like
8 the idea of a judiciary person having control
9 over everything that's going to affect our
10 students and our educators in the community,
11 just like that single judge. I do like to
12 work with the legislators. We can put
13 pressure on them when we need to to really
14 bring things around if we're not satisfied
15 with it.

16 But the main concern we have is in the
17 area of mental health. The mental health --
18 we've worked in that system for years here in
19 the state and in Hattiesburg, and we're very
20 concerned that a proposal like 42 will, with
21 its -- if you look at the fiscal analysis of
22 it -- cause the other departments in the state
23 that sorely need funds to suffer -- the
24 Department of Corrections, Transportation.
25 The Department of Mental Health really

1 concerns us a lot. It appears we would have
2 to take at least a 7 percent cut; at least
3 they're looking to propose that as part of
4 finding the funds to do the Initiative 42
5 business.

6 So we definitely don't want to
7 compromise some of these key programs, these
8 other key programs in our state and cause them
9 to suffer, especially, for example, the mental
10 health issues. You see it in the news all the
11 time right now how critical it is to have
12 prevention and treatment programs in our
13 state. And that's our great concern for 42.

14 We certainly want to fund education, God
15 knows, and we will always support that, but we
16 would appreciate your concerns about those
17 other issues that affects our families and
18 vote accordingly.

19 Thank you.

20 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Kinnan.

21 James Hutto from Petal, Mississippi, is
22 in favor of Amendment 42.

23 *MR. HUTTO:* I appreciate the
24 opportunity to speak tonight. My name is
25 James Hutto.

1 Like most of you in the room, I have
2 many different roles, and tonight -- many of
3 you may know me as a retired educator.
4 Tonight I'm talking as a grandfather to a
5 granddaughter that's in first grade in the
6 Petal schools, Petal Primary. And I have
7 another granddaughter who will be going into
8 kindergarten next year. My first-grader is
9 getting a good education; there's no doubt
10 about it. I appreciate all they do. All the
11 adults in that school system are working with
12 her and giving extra time, and she's getting a
13 good education, and I'm very thankful for
14 that.

15 But I often think about what could be,
16 what could be. Because, you see, in Petal --
17 and I talk about Petal because that's where I
18 live, but you can fill in the blank with your
19 school district too. In Petal, since 1997,
20 \$20 million we've been shortchanged in funding
21 for Petal. This year alone, \$1.7 million that
22 we've been shorted in funding. So I think
23 about what could be.

24 We're talking here about an adequate
25 education. This is not flying first class.

1 This is flying coach. And that's what we're
2 talking about, adequate education. Not an
3 extraordinary one, just funding an adequate
4 education.

5 I'm really amazed about a couple of
6 things about this. First of all, I'm amazed
7 about the fact that most people that I think
8 that came up with this idea, this Initiative
9 42A, they railed against all kind of federal
10 intervention in the schools, and they talk a
11 lot about schools being a state issue. And
12 they're exactly right. The Federal
13 Constitution doesn't mention education. It is
14 a state issue. And not only is it a state
15 issue, it's a state right. And I agree with
16 that totally.

17 when you think about it, think about a
18 state right as a coin, on one side of the
19 coin. You flip that coin over, you have
20 responsibility. And it's the responsibility
21 of those people who talk all the time about we
22 don't need federal intervention, we can do
23 this at the state level, local level, they
24 need to understand yes, that's correct, we
25 need to be responsible for our schools. I

1 agree it's a state issue. I agree the state
2 should be responsible for funding education in
3 our state.

4 And another thing that amazes me about
5 this is we need an amendment to get the State
6 Legislature to do what they're supposed to
7 do -- to fund our schools, to adequately fund
8 our schools. It's just amazing.

9 I think the rainy day fund I've heard is
10 fully funded, and I'm grateful for that
11 because rainy days will come. If the money's
12 there, fund it. It's just the will, the
13 political will. And it amazes me that we have
14 to put an initiative to the Constitution to
15 force people that we elect to do the right
16 thing.

17 And I ask myself, "why is that?" And
18 it's a simple answer. Our elected officials
19 have failed us. It's a simple answer. Before
20 I retired, I might not could have said that,
21 but I can say it now. They've failed us.

22 And all I'm asking is -- with all the
23 passion I can muster, I will ask you to not
24 only go vote for 42, but get your family and
25 friends. We've got to get people to come out

1 and vote for this. It's critically important.

2 Thank you.

3 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Hutto.

4 Mike Boyd from Hattiesburg, opposed to
5 Initiative 42.

6 *MR. BOYD:* Thank you.

7 My concern boils down to one thing, and
8 it is funding. We know this issue is at heart
9 about money. So since 42 is based on having
10 funding come from future projections, my
11 concern is there's no guarantee that these
12 projections will come through. And it says so
13 right in our pamphlet down at the bottom of
14 the fiscal analysis: "The 2016 revenues are
15 not adequate to support this funding increase
16 without the legislature having to cut agency
17 budgets or identify new sources of revenue."

18 Now, we know what these new sources of
19 revenue are projected to be, but what if they
20 fall through? And what if this affects higher
21 ed? That's the biggest concern of me, being a
22 community college instructor. If higher ed is
23 affected and budgets are cut from universities
24 and community colleges, what effect will that
25 have on these graduates that are products of

1 42? Are they unable to afford to go to
2 college in our state? Do they have to go out
3 of state in order to do so?

4 Another issue that has not been
5 discussed but one that I've been made aware of
6 in my years in the community college system is
7 the idea of mid-level funding. This is a
8 measure very similar to the adequate education
9 program in that the state should have funded
10 mid-level community colleges, junior colleges
11 directly in between public and universities.
12 They have fallen through on this consistently.
13 Will we see additional measures to rectify
14 that if this passes? If it passes, will we
15 see an impact on mid-level funding for good or
16 for bad?

17 I agree. I think we can do better, but
18 we can do better planning to ensure that, by
19 shoring up one leg of the table, we're not
20 going to erode the other three.

21 Thank you.

22 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Boyd.

23 Angela Bedenbaugh. Ms. Bedenbaugh is
24 from Hattiesburg, and she's in favor.

25 *DR. BEDENBAUGH:* That is Dr. Angela

1 Bedenbaugh.

2 I've been working in education for a
3 number of years. I would like to correct
4 something that was said before. Our
5 government is based on three balancing
6 things -- the legislative, the executive, and
7 the courts. And actually you can look back
8 with 42A, they took that to court in Hinds
9 County and they won. And it was then appealed
10 to the supreme court, which denied their suit.

11 There's a lot of stuff that goes on that
12 I'm not sure all of you are aware of. When a
13 student goes to a university, a lot of them
14 have to take remedial courses because they
15 were not prepared when they went to college.
16 They were not prepared. That means that you
17 as parents, grandparents, or whatever are
18 going to have to pay for an extra semester or
19 two to just get them up to speed. So you're
20 looking there at that.

21 Another thing that's happened: As the
22 funds have been cut, the educational
23 enhancement funds used to be \$600 per teacher
24 to buy classroom supplies. The last time I
25 saw this -- I haven't been able to get

1 anything for this year, but the last time I
2 saw it, last year, was 200. what's happening
3 is some better teachers are spending their own
4 personal money to get enough money to teach,
5 to provide the supplies that teachers need in
6 the classroom.

7 If the legislature has a good
8 understanding about education, then why did
9 they pass a bill that basically has denied
10 over 50 students at the University of Southern
11 Mississippi a teacher's license this year?
12 And statewide it's estimated between 150 and
13 200 potential teachers will not be getting
14 teacher certificates because of the
15 legislature not putting in something that was
16 really stupid.

17 One last thing. I pride myself on being
18 financially responsible. If the legislature
19 is so much into all this and they want to fund
20 things, why are they talking about a tax cut?
21 That's going to help get more money for
22 everything? It doesn't make sense to me. I
23 want to know who taught them that.

24 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Doctor.

25 Ric McCluskey from Hattiesburg is

1 opposed to Initiative 42. Mr. McCluskey.

2 *MR. MCCLUSKEY:* Thank you, Secretary
3 Hosemann.

4 Let's really look at the logic of those
5 who are in favor of Initiative 42 and are
6 asking us to believe. Mr. Adams got up here
7 and told us we can't trust the politicians in
8 Jackson right now to appropriately fund
9 education, but he asks us to trust another
10 elected official in Hinds County. How does
11 that make any sense?

12 Now, right now the people have a method
13 to address the government. It's called the
14 elections. If you don't like what your
15 elected officials are doing, vote them out.
16 But how are we going to address an elected
17 official in Hinds County down here in
18 Hattiesburg?

19 How many of you have ties in Hattiesburg
20 Public Schools and Petal? A lot of us here.
21 So what happens if that judge tells you, "I
22 don't think y'all deserve that much money"?
23 what do you do then?

24 Now, right now what's not being talked
25 about is we do not have a funding problem in

1 Mississippi; we have an appropriations
2 problem. 152 school districts for 82
3 counties. Each one has a superintendent of
4 education, operating costs, benefits. Making
5 \$400,000 a year when you count salary and
6 benefits. You have a state superintendent of
7 education making the same.

8 Now, until we address those issues, any
9 attempt at education reform is not genuine.
10 Why keep putting money into a sinking ship?
11 We know where the money is going. It's
12 irresponsible and it's wrong to the parents,
13 students, and teachers to give this false idea
14 that we're actually doing something when
15 you're cheating them out of the money. It
16 doesn't make it to them. But they try to sell
17 us this idea, this emotionally charged
18 initiative, saying "we're going to give the
19 students, the parents, and the teachers more
20 money in the classroom." That simply isn't
21 true. We can't address the leaks that are
22 going on right now, but you expect me to
23 believe that after this, we're going to change
24 everything?

25 If you don't agree with what your

1 legislators are doing, vote them out. But
2 tell me how you're going to vote out a Hinds
3 County judge. Anybody got a response to that?
4 How are you going to do it? You can't.

5 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* He
6 doesn't make the final decision.

7 *MR. MCCLUSKEY:* It goes to the supreme
8 court. Guess who they are? Elected
9 officials. So there you go. We're right
10 back to square one.

11 So once again, we don't have a funding
12 problem; we have an appropriations problem.
13 Until someone can actually sit down and define
14 adequate funding -- which they currently
15 can't -- then we're just treading water right
16 now.

17 Thank you.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you,
19 Mr. McCluskey.

20 Dierdre Payne. And she rises in favor
21 of Initiative 42. Watch that cord there,
22 please, ma'am.

23 *DR. PAYNE:* I am Dierdre Payne from
24 Ridgeland, Madison County. I'm a retired
25 marketing specialist. I was educated in the

1 Diocese of Natchez-Jackson. Some of you
2 will recognize that as a Catholic school
3 system. My parents sent me to the Catholic
4 school because the public school funding was
5 grossly inadequate. I graduated at the top
6 of my class. I got a full academic
7 scholarship to a college in Minnesota, which
8 is where I went to school. I was gone for
9 40 years, and I'm back, and I am woefully
10 disappointed.

11 Mississippi's most valuable resource is
12 its people, and an educated populous is its
13 best defense. Undereducating and miseducating
14 citizens has resulted in generations of
15 underachievement that has depressed the entire
16 region.

17 The government's purpose is to provide
18 for the common good and to motivate citizens
19 to be their best in order to make positive
20 contributions to the state. Our state's
21 continued failure to provide quality public
22 education for all citizens is evident in low
23 academic achievement scores, a gross lack of
24 competitive employment skills in the
25 technological and scientific economy, and the

1 debilitating lack of industry and businesses
2 that help move more Mississippians out of
3 poverty.

4 It is a sad set of circumstances that
5 even adequate funding for public education has
6 not been achieved in Mississippi. The people
7 of Mississippi deserve to have all the public
8 schools in the state funded to the level of
9 scholastic knowledge and skill that advances
10 our state in the global economy.

11 I support Initiative 42 because it
12 ensures accountability for funding public
13 education in Mississippi, even if only at the
14 lowest level of expectations.

15 I urge you to support and vote for
16 Initiative 42. Accept nothing less. Accept
17 no substitute.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Ms. Payne.
19 We're glad you're home. Don't forget to
20 register.

21 Ms. Hope Baldwin. Ms. Baldwin. She
22 rises opposed.

23 *MS. BALDWIN:* As he said, I'm Hope
24 Baldwin.

25 I want to talk to you tonight as a

1 parent who has children in Hattiesburg Public
2 schools. The classrooms are overcrowded.
3 which I have a three-year-old that I can
4 barely control. If a teacher has 23 students
5 to one adult, how are they going to control
6 that child? which creates an environment
7 that's not conducive to learning.

8 I also come to you as an adult educator.
9 I educate the work force. People come to me
10 as recent high school graduates that can
11 barely operate a mouse on a computer. They
12 can barely fill out a job application on a
13 computer. why do you think that is? They
14 don't have the technology. The technology
15 that they need is not in the classroom because
16 the schools are not fully funded.

17 That's all I wanted to say. Thank you.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you.

19 Carolyn Townes from Ridgeland,
20 Mississippi, speaking in favor of Initiative
21 42. Ms. Townes.

22 *MS. TOWNES:* Good evening. My name is
23 Carolyn Townes. I live in Ridgeland,
24 Mississippi, but Hattiesburg is my hometown.
25 Like Mr. Adams, I'm a product of the

1 Hattiesburg Public School System. I've been
2 to Walthall Elementary, Hawkins Junior High,
3 and graduated from Hattiesburg High School.
4 Go Tigers.

5 But I come to you tonight in a different
6 role. I am the co-president of the League of
7 Women Voters of Mississippi. We are a
8 nonpartisan organization composed of men and
9 women. And our mission -- one of our missions
10 is to further an equitable quality public
11 education for all children. The League
12 promotes self-sufficiency for individuals and
13 families. We support programs that promote
14 the well-being, development, and safety of our
15 children. We promote adequate funding for
16 education.

17 Our state is ranked 50 or close to it in
18 almost all the positive characteristics of the
19 state, and we're ranked first or close to it
20 in almost all of the negative ways. We want
21 to see those statistics reversed, and we can
22 only do that when our children are educated.

23 Our children deserve trained teachers.
24 They need safe school buses. They need
25 textbooks, and they need computers. Their

1 teacher should not have to be buying supplies
2 from their own funds for their classrooms.
3 Their principal should not have to worry when
4 it rains to see whether the roof is going to
5 leak. Our children deserve better.

6 Almost 20 years ago the legislature
7 passed legislation and determined that it
8 should provide sufficient funding for an
9 adequate education for kindergarten through
10 the 12th grade, and it determined how much
11 that should be. Yet the legislature has only
12 obeyed its own law twice. It is time to
13 rectify this miscarriage of justice. The
14 children deserve better.

15 The League of Women Voters of
16 Mississippi supports Initiative 42. Thank
17 you.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Ms. Townes.
19 Taylor Brinkley. Mr. Brinkley is in
20 favor of 42. He's from Petal, Mississippi.

21 *MR. BRINKLEY:* Good afternoon. How's
22 everybody?

23 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Good.

24 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* Good.
25 Thank you.

1 *MR. BRINKLEY:* I want to thank all of
2 y'all for being here in support of
3 Initiative 42 today. It's the most
4 important issue on the ballot this year.
5 It's the most important issue for our
6 children and their education, to our
7 communities, and to Mississippi's future as
8 a whole.

9 My name is Taylor Brinkley, and I'm a
10 Democratic candidate for District 102 here in
11 Hattiesburg. And as a proud father of two
12 young children, Ethan and Atticus, four years
13 old and one year old -- I have my hands
14 full -- I support Initiative 42 because their
15 future matters to me more than anything.

16 It's our moral responsibility to fund
17 our public schools, and that means providing
18 our students with the tools and resources that
19 they need to succeed, regardless of their ZIP
20 Code.

21 Now, I'm a product of Petal Public
22 Schools; and as a product of Petal schools and
23 being the House candidate for District 102, I
24 can tell you right now I am deeply committed
25 to the success of our children and our

1 students and our public schools throughout
2 Hattiesburg and throughout the area.

3 Now, since 2009 Mississippi's
4 Legislature has underfunded our schools in
5 Hattiesburg and Petal and Forrest County as a
6 whole by the tune of about \$24 million. I'm
7 sorry; that's \$29 million. That was an
8 underestimate. And that's enough money to
9 provide our students with 125 additional
10 teachers every year during that period of
11 time.

12 Now, what would that mean for our
13 students? That would basically mean that they
14 have smaller classrooms like we were talking
15 about. They have more one-on-one time with
16 their teachers and time to focus on their
17 studies. They have better books, better
18 technology, better desks, better supplies. It
19 gives them pride because they know that their
20 community supports them. And that's what we
21 want to give to our children -- a sense of
22 pride in education.

23 Now, we've heard the reason that our
24 legislators don't want to pass Initiative 42.
25 Now, we didn't hear any of that from our

1 legislators themselves, but we did hear it
2 from Mr. Latino. I understand he's stepped
3 out. But none of them came here to explain to
4 you why they don't support 42.

5 They call it an amendment to the
6 initiative. It's just a decoy. It's a
7 mirage, a distraction. It's supposed to split
8 our vote so that they can keep the power they
9 want, so we would have to go to them to ask
10 them for the funds that we need for our kids
11 and for our schools.

12 Here in District 102 our current
13 representative has voted to underfund our
14 schools for the last seven consecutive years.
15 He and his colleagues in the House of
16 Representatives can talk about education all
17 they want, but they're talking with empty
18 words because there's no action there. They
19 like to use buzz words like "record funding,
20 teacher pay raises," but when it comes down to
21 it, the record funding they talk about is
22 comprised mostly of teacher pay raises that
23 they put in place.

24 Our leaders have forced our hand in
25 response, and we need Initiative 42 to hold

1 them accountable and to force the promise of
2 our children's future.

3 Make no mistake: Every student in our
4 state is counting on all of us to keep that
5 promise, both in what we say and what we do,
6 and we can begin to solve that problem.

7 My name is Taylor Brinkley, and I am
8 running for House District 102. My campaign
9 is built on fully funding public education,
10 and I am 100 percent in favor of Initiative
11 42. I hope you will join me on November 3rd
12 to vote for Initiative 42.

13 Thank y'all.

14 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you,
15 Mr. Brinkley.

16 Dennis Baum from Hattiesburg,
17 Mississippi.

18 *MR. BAUM:* My name is Dennis Baum. I
19 am a realtor here in Hattiesburg. I moved
20 back here about three years ago so that I
21 could be closer to my two grandchildren. I
22 am a strong supporter of 42.

23 I just want to say, lest I forget this
24 important point: I'm preaching to the
25 faithful here. I know there are a lot more

1 people here in support of 42 than are against
2 it. So when we leave here tonight, get some
3 of those yard signs, print out some of these
4 ballots. And don't sit on your hands; get out
5 there and talk to your neighbors so that we
6 can get this thing done.

7 Now, I don't believe that governing by
8 proposition is probably the most effective way
9 in order to secure adequate funding for
10 Mississippi schools, but, by golly, our
11 legislature brought it on themselves, and
12 we're going to take it to them.

13 I worked on the initiative. It was
14 called something else then -- Better Schools,
15 Better Jobs -- and it was my pleasure to go
16 around to people who gladly signed the
17 amendment or the ballot -- the initiative in
18 order to get this on the ballot. Let's not
19 sneeze that 200,000 people came forward and
20 their hard work.

21 And I tell you nobody told me while I
22 was filling out and getting the petition
23 signed that there was a back door to this
24 thing. Nobody told me that the legislature
25 could, at the 11th hour, come up with their

1 own proposition to defeat this thing.

2 And I tell you one thing -- and I hope
3 you'll tell the governor for me,
4 Mr. Hosemann -- I resent it. It's a slap in
5 the face of the citizens when they do speak up
6 in this state -- because they're kind of
7 low-keyed -- when they do speak up in this
8 state, to tell the governor who always wants
9 to do the will of what the people of the state
10 of Mississippi want to do, no sooner than they
11 do it via this proposition, then he slams the
12 door in their face. And I think that is not
13 representative of what good government should
14 be.

15 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* Where do
16 we get signs?

17 *MR. BAUM:* Signs are in the corner up
18 here. We'll give you some signs gladly.

19 Mississippi is 48th in the nation
20 according to the two polls or surveys that I
21 took in terms of education. And the governor
22 and the legislature, this wringing of hands
23 and gnashing of teeth, why people won't stay
24 in Mississippi when they get educated and then
25 they leave, it's like a mystery to them.

1 well, please tell the governor that it's
2 because there are no jobs here because we
3 don't have any education to provide for good
4 jobs, and the companies don't want to move
5 here. We get the crumbs that are left over on
6 the table. All the other places that are
7 going to Alabama and throughout the South, we
8 get whatever is left over.

9 It was not wasted on me that the
10 governor was preaching to us one day about the
11 fact -- listen; wait for it -- that one week
12 Mississippi was ninth in the nation in job
13 creation. And the governor was ticked off
14 because he didn't get any recognition for it.
15 Ninth. Okay?

16 So hopefully you will all take time to
17 go vote and support 42. And I thank you for
18 your time.

19 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Baum.

20 Anna Morris. She is in favor of
21 Initiative 42.

22 *MS. MORRIS:* My name is Anna Morris,
23 and I am pleased to be Mississippi's teacher
24 of the year for the state of Mississippi. I
25 consider myself a champion for public

1 schools. I believe so much in what we do
2 every day. And it's emotional.

3 I was looking at my second-graders
4 today. My mom teaches second grade in another
5 state, and she has 13 second-graders in her
6 class. And I said, "Mom, I have more students
7 in one-half of my classroom than you do in the
8 whole thing."

9 And she said, "Yeah. That's because you
10 teach in Mississippi."

11 And I thought about that, and it is.
12 It's because I teach in Mississippi. And so
13 we are packed to the gills in there. Our
14 class count, I think, is 28. So if you can
15 fathom 28 second-graders together -- well, if
16 you can't, just come on by. I'm going to let
17 everybody look. We'll let all the people that
18 are opposed, let them come and see. That way
19 you can get an accurate picture.

20 The thing is that I too feel both sides
21 of this argument. I know that it feels so
22 politically charged. It feels like it's a
23 Republican thing; it feels like it's a
24 Democrat thing. But it's not; it's really a
25 kid thing. It's really a student thing; it's

1 really a teacher thing. It's really, really a
2 teacher thing because we love your children.

3 I am not complaining about my job. I'm
4 not complaining about my district or my
5 superintendent because those people, they love
6 these children too. We've got that love part
7 down. But our hands are tied. They are tied
8 right now. And if people are feeling
9 uncomfortable fighting legislation, well, for
10 years and years and years we have a model of
11 being on the bottom. So how much worse could
12 it be? You know, when you have years and
13 years of just being at the bottom -- Number 1
14 for corruption and Number 48 for education.
15 Forget if the judge makes you uncomfortable.
16 Okay? We don't care anymore, because we're
17 fed up and we're tired.

18 I want you to know that I would never
19 vote for or endorse or stand by anything that
20 I thought would hurt these kids or hurt this
21 community or would hurt this state. Never. I
22 love this state, and I love the people in it.
23 But wholeheartedly I support Initiative 42
24 because we can't wait for the legislature to
25 get it together. And they've had years to

1 try. And now it's our turn, and it's our
2 students' turn, and it's our teachers' turn.
3 Okay? I want us to look at our children and
4 be able to say there is enough room for all of
5 you, all of our desks match, everybody gets a
6 book, and everybody gets a laptop. Amen.

7 Thank you.

8 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Ms. Morris.
9 Thank you and congratulations.

10 Cynthia wallace.

11 *MS. WALLACE:* My name is Cynthia
12 wallace. I'm the president of the
13 Mississippi PTA. And if you don't believe
14 that we need adequate funding for schools in
15 Mississippi, come with me and go to the
16 different schools in this state. Sure, you
17 have some schools that are really good,
18 really well off. The buildings are
19 beautiful; they have a lot of equipment.
20 But go up to the Delta. I was there the
21 other day, and the principal did not have
22 enough help to help him mow the lawn. He
23 was out there mowing the lawn.

24 I mean, it's unheard of in a lot of
25 places. But when you walk into a building --

1 walk into a building on a day that the weather
2 is bad. I guarantee you you will be doing a
3 little zigzag going through the hallway trying
4 not to slip or slide or run into a bucket.
5 Okay?

6 How many people went to school in the
7 '60s or '70s? Did you have to get a list and
8 bring a list home to your mom and dad to bring
9 toilet paper, copier paper so that the teacher
10 have enough paper just to print tests on? And
11 did you have a pile of books? I mean, I had
12 so many books, I had a book bag I had to take
13 to school. But I had books that I took home.

14 My son -- I have to fight to get a book
15 for my son in his class every year. They have
16 a set in the room, but nothing to take home.
17 I don't even see homework anymore because the
18 teachers -- the schools don't have books.
19 That's just in Jackson. Now, what about the
20 rest of the state where they can't afford
21 books? Now, how are you going to educate
22 these kids if you can't send homework home
23 because you don't have copy paper to print off
24 the stuff to send home, or you don't have
25 books? That's why we have kids that are not

1 at the level they should be.

2 I mean, if you don't believe me, just go
3 up here to the school. Just sign up and go up
4 there and say you're visiting and you want to
5 observe class. See how full some of those
6 classes are. They're so full, the teachers
7 can't keep control of their classes because
8 they're spending so much time with the kids
9 that are problems. We used to have helpers in
10 some of those classes. We don't have that
11 anymore.

12 Now, this is a killer: I found out a
13 school in Olive Branch, the PTA had to buy
14 toilets. There's a school in Jackson where
15 the toilets do not work. They have one toilet
16 in the entire school that works in the
17 elementary school. And they have to take
18 turns scheduling the different classrooms to
19 go to the toilet. Now, doesn't that sound
20 ridiculous?

21 So when you go to that booth to vote,
22 think about our kids. Aren't they worth just
23 the basics, if nothing else?

24 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Ms. Morris.

25 Bill Jones from Petal. Mr. Jones.

1 *MR. JONES:* Thank you, Delbert.

2 [Inaudible]

3 *MR. HOSEMANN:* She can't hear you,
4 Mr. Jones.

5 [COURT REPORTER NOTE: COULD NOT HEAR
6 PORTIONS OF SPEAKER'S COMMENTS AND THERE MAY
7 BE INACCURACIES]

8 *MR. JONES:* I bring a unique
9 perspective on some of this to you. First,
10 these were recruited by legislators.
11 They're not coming because they've been
12 really beaten about the vote and this
13 process, a process that they authorized and
14 you're made to feel bad and criticized
15 because the legislature failed to fully fund
16 education.

17 I have been on the State Board of
18 Education for about the last 12 years. I was
19 a member of the legislature for 13 years. And
20 the Democrats did not properly fund MAEP, and
21 the Republicans are not properly funding MAEP.
22 And the people are tired of it; they're sick
23 and tired of being sick and tired.

24 Now, Mr. [inaudible] is in the room
25 somewhere. He's telling the truth. If you

1 sit here on your rear ends tonight, you're
2 going to lose, because those people in power
3 in the state, they are going to twist and turn
4 what's been said about the good things about
5 42 into something that's really unfair and
6 improper. In my opinion, hypocritical, if not
7 an outright misrepresentation.

8 Seven percent -- that was something that
9 the chairman of appropriations came up with.
10 Who knows what that means? A lot of our money
11 does go to education. Those folks in IHL that
12 are opposed to this, they are doing exactly
13 what they wanted to happen. They wanted to
14 pit education folks against education folks.

15 Let me tell the IHL folks: You're
16 underfunded now too. And if you don't speak
17 up, you're going to die on the vine. If you
18 don't speak up, you're not going to have a
19 freshman class; you're going to have a
20 remediation class, because K-12 is suffering.

21 MAEP is about a Chevrolet. That's all
22 it is. It's not a Buick. And I'll give you
23 some examples. Petal is 55 mills. They're a
24 Chevrolet. And they've got good tires and a
25 radio. Hattiesburg is a Chevrolet, and it's

1 got air conditioning and a [inaudible]
2 department. They're at 55 mills. Lamar
3 County, 43 mills. And I learned today that
4 Lamar County's school board, their
5 superintendent is staying neutral. Staying
6 out of this. And I'm scratching my head.
7 where are you coming from? what are you
8 thinking?

9 I want y'all to understand something:
10 Mississippi has 40 percent of our districts
11 and counties and children who are not
12 receiving a very good education. And I know
13 this. I know this. we have eight or nine
14 school districts right now under
15 conservatorships in the state of Mississippi.
16 we took over because they can't run them
17 properly because of academics or money. It's
18 one or the other.

19 we don't have to go to the Delta. There
20 are a lot of poor school districts right here
21 around us who do not have adequate money to
22 properly fund education. Let me give you an
23 example. Sunflower County, a mill base is
24 \$27,000 for the children of this state.
25 Madison city, a mill rate is \$1 million. Have

1 you heard politicians address how they're
2 going to solve that inadequacy, that
3 disparity? No. We're at the bottom of the
4 nation. They say 48. We're not. We're in
5 the 40-something category, but we're 50th on
6 many, many categories.

7 *UNIDENTIFIED AUDIENCE MEMBER:* 51
8 counting D.C.

9 *MR. JONES:* If you count D.C.

10 Now, if you want to be prejudice, be
11 prejudice. But if you don't understand
12 economics of children who don't have a decent
13 education and as a result can't get a decent
14 job, than the 60 percent of you can continue
15 to pay our taxes. And that's what's happening
16 in our state.

17 I made a long list of things here. I
18 know I don't have all the time in the world.

19 One judge in Hinds County. It's an
20 exaggeration to say that one judge is going to
21 take money from one district and give it to
22 another district. That's just an outright
23 misrepresentation. It's not one judge, and he
24 is not the final arbitrator. There's nine
25 guys seven blocks north that will decide the

1 issue. All they're deciding is whether or not
2 the legislature should do what they promised
3 to do.

4 And why are we here? Because you can't
5 trust the legislature -- and I was one of
6 them -- to do what they said they would do.

7 Now, the MAEP formula is written into
8 law. What is adequate is part of that
9 formula. The Department of Education changes
10 that formula every year. Certain people in
11 the legislature said, "Well, you're not
12 figuring it right. We're going to make you --
13 we passed a law to make you hire a CPA firm to
14 use our formula and figures." Guess what it
15 came out per child? Two dollars' difference.
16 Two dollars' difference.

17 All you're trying to do is make the
18 legislature do what they said they were
19 supposed to do. And the bottom line is this:
20 If you fully fund MAEP, you're going to have
21 to cut funds somewhere else, and they know
22 this. They know this. You're going to have
23 to cut funds from this or that agency. But so
24 what? If you don't fund K-12, where are your
25 priorities?

1 Let me say this: It's really a matter
2 of economics. Our casino taxes are the lowest
3 in the nation outside of Nevada. Our hotel
4 tax is 5 percent. It's the lowest in the
5 nation. Go to Orlando and try to rent a hotel
6 room for 5 percent or New Orleans for
7 5 percent tax on the hotel room. And just
8 drive through the casino parking lot and see
9 where the cars are from. They're from out of
10 state. Sixty-eight percent of them are from
11 out of state. If you go to Atlanta, New
12 Orleans, Nashville they export their tax bill
13 to make people come to see them and to pay the
14 bill. And we're not doing it. We're giving
15 away the store. I'm not a liberal. I'm a
16 plain old pragmatic economist.

17 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Okay, Mr. Jones.

18 *MR. JONES:* Am I out of time?

19 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Yes, sir, but I'm going
20 to give you another minute. How about that?

21 *MR. JONES:* Well, thank you, Delbert.

22 Let me end by saying this: That the
23 success of any democracy depends upon whether
24 people vote.

25 Thank you.

1 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you very much.

2 Many of the speakers have talked about
3 voting. The ballot box is the highway to
4 change and how we operate in Mississippi.
5 When y'all go on November the 3rd, nobody will
6 have to put their pen -- their finger in ink.
7 It will all be you go and vote voluntarily in
8 a free republic in a Democratic fashion just
9 like you did tonight. And we are all blessed
10 to be able to have that kind of atmosphere in
11 which to cast our ballot.

12 We have two more of these. Every word
13 of this will be transcribed on the Secretary
14 of State's website. I welcome you to read it
15 and look at it. Good arguments tonight, and
16 you'll see others in other places -- some
17 different from what you heard tonight. So I
18 would encourage you to look at our website.

19 Most importantly, I would encourage you
20 to go vote. At the end of this, at the end of
21 all of this it will be quite a frustrating
22 process if we don't have the majority of
23 Mississippians vote on such a critical issue.

24 That said, good evening. Go read to
25 your child or grandchild. It's great fun.

1 Enjoy your evening. Thank you so much for
2 coming.

3 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 7:13 P.M.)

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CERTIFICATE OF COURT REPORTER

I, *SHARRON F. ALLEN*, Certified Shorthand Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Mississippi at large, hereby certify that the foregoing 83 pages contain a full, true, and correct transcript of the proceedings as taken by me at the time and place heretofore stated in the aforementioned matter by stenotype and later reduced to typewritten form by me to the best of my skill and ability by means of computer-aided transcription.

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

WITNESS MY SIGNATURE AND SEAL, this the 22nd day of September, 2015.

SHARRON F. ALLEN, CSR, RPR
CSR NO. 1144

My Commission Expires:

November 5, 2015