

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

TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC HEARING

Mississippi School of the Arts
308 W. Cherokee Street
Brookhaven, Mississippi 39601
On Tuesday, September 8, 2015
at 5:30 p.m.

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

1 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Good afternoon,
2 everyone.

3 First of all, welcome to our eighth
4 public hearing on the ballot initiatives that
5 go on the Mississippi ballot in November. And
6 what we're going to do tonight, you'll see a
7 priceless exercise in our democracy and our
8 republic to be able to come and speak to your
9 fellow citizens about constitutional
10 initiatives that are being proposed in
11 Mississippi.

12 And I'm going to give you just a little
13 bit of history, and then we'll kick right off.
14 The history of the ballot initiatives began in
15 the '90s when the legislature adopted a
16 process that said if you get so many
17 signatures -- and in this case we had to have
18 107,000. We got quite a bit more than that.
19 If you have so many signatures, you can put
20 something on the ballot to amend the
21 Constitution. And that process started with
22 Ballot Initiative No. 1, and this is Ballot
23 Initiative No. 42.

24 During that process many of them did not
25 get the required number of signatures, so they

1 never made the ballot. And even though they
2 never made the ballot, eventually most of
3 those lapses after a year. The signatures
4 don't last any longer.

5 So what we did was, when these
6 particular ones came -- we had had four before
7 this. Term limits acquired the sufficient
8 number of signatures and was rejected by the
9 citizens on the ballot. Then a couple of
10 years ago, three years ago, we had three
11 initiatives on the ballot; and those were
12 personhood, the right-to-life amendment,
13 so-called; the voter ID; and the imminent
14 domain. Three different constitutional
15 amendments. And of those, imminent domain and
16 voter ID passed, and personhood failed.

17 So in Mississippi history we have had
18 four reach the ballot, two of which passed and
19 two of which failed. Now we come to the fifth
20 one to reach the ballot. And it sets
21 historical precedence in that it was certified
22 to the Secretary of State's office by the
23 chancery clerks and then to the attorney
24 general, who wrote the ballot title, and then
25 was placed on the ballot.

1 when that occurred last fall, the
2 Mississippi Legislature, under that statute
3 that allows you to put constitutional
4 amendments on the ballot, the Mississippi
5 Legislature drafted a competing amendment.
6 It's called and was required to be called 42A.
7 So you have 42 and 42 -- and I can't make an A
8 without YMCA -- we have 42A. That competing
9 amendment was adopted by the Mississippi
10 Legislature, the House and Senate, and also
11 will be subject to your approval on the
12 ballot.

13 So with that, the statute says the
14 Secretary of State is to go and hold five
15 public hearings in all five Congressional
16 districts. That has led us to hold eight of
17 them, as I think it is critically important
18 for the citizens to be able to voice their
19 opinions to their fellow citizens around the
20 state. And we've had seven different public
21 hearings around.

22 Can y'all hear me in the back? Not
23 well? Well, I'll lean down. How about that?
24 We're all among friends.

25 So with the passage of 42A by the

1 Mississippi Legislature, the Secretary of
2 State is required to go out into these five
3 different Congressional districts and to hold
4 hearings.

5 As part of that process it's outlined
6 that we participate by having someone speak in
7 favor of the amendment and somebody speak
8 opposed to the amendment, and that's what you
9 will see this evening. Rana Mitchell will be
10 speaking on behalf of Amendment 42, and Frank
11 Corder will be speaking opposed to that.
12 Mr. Corder will then speak in favor of 42A,
13 and Ms. Mitchell will speak against 42A.

14 That process will be followed by
15 individual participants being able to come and
16 speak. We record every word of this. She
17 does a great job in this venue. And all of
18 those will go on our website, and she'll have
19 the first ones on there before October 1st.
20 So there will be plenty of time for everybody
21 to read what you say. So don't say anything
22 you don't want typed. Everything that you say
23 in here is going to be transcribed, so be
24 nice.

25 we will go through that process and

1 allow everyone who has signed up to speak, and
2 you will be offered the opportunity to speak.
3 And usually those are two to three minutes in
4 duration. So I'll call you to the podium when
5 we do that.

6 In the house today we are pleased to
7 have Senator Doty is here.

8 Do we have any other elected officials
9 I'm missing anywhere? Any other elected
10 officials with us? We're pleased to have you
11 with us. We appreciate very much y'all
12 coming.

13 We will start with approximately ten
14 minutes -- up to ten minutes -- to speak for
15 42. You'll see in your chairs we have printed
16 up what 42 says and what 42A says. And you
17 will also see what the current Constitution
18 says.

19 And also in your booklet -- Lea Anne
20 will be right down here and will be waving
21 when you get off, if you go past. Watch your
22 signals.

23 In your booklet you'll also see the
24 constitutional initiatives. This is our
25 publication which is required for us to be

1 published. And it will outline the process
2 that I have just described to each of you.

3 All right. Without further ado, then,
4 Ms. Mitchell, would you rise in favor of
5 Initiative Measure 42.

6 *MS. MITCHELL:* Good evening. Can
7 y'all hear me? You have to be the exact
8 right height.

9 Thank you for the invitation to speak
10 here today. My name is Rana Mitchell, and I'm
11 here today in support of Initiative 42 for
12 better schools. I am here tonight as a
13 parent. I'm not a lawyer; I'm not a lobbyist;
14 I am no politician. I'm just a mom.

15 I have two boys who attend public school
16 in Eupora, and they are two of the most
17 important reasons that I am here tonight on
18 behalf of Initiative 42.

19 I am also the assistant superintendent
20 of Carroll County Public School District, and
21 I'm partially responsible for the educational
22 success of over 1,000 students. So I promise
23 you I know firsthand how important Initiative
24 42 is to us.

25 I think we can all agree that every

1 child in Mississippi has a fundamental right
2 to a public education. That means several
3 things. It means safe and modern buildings;
4 classrooms that don't leak when it rains;
5 up-to-date computers, technology, and lab
6 equipment; enough textbooks for each child to
7 take a book home with them at night; smaller
8 class sizes; more AP classes; and safe buses.

9 In 1997 our legislature passed a law
10 called the Mississippi Adequate Education
11 Program to adequately fund K-12 education in
12 every school district in our state. Yet,
13 since 1997 the legislature has repeatedly
14 broken its own law and severely underfunded
15 every single school in Mississippi.

16 The results are clear. Local school
17 districts have been shortchanged. Your local
18 property taxes have gone up. Too many schools
19 have too few teachers, outdated textbooks, old
20 facilities, unsafe buses, and a lack of
21 computers. The underfunding of our schools is
22 hurting our state's ability to attract
23 companies to move here. And our students,
24 they're not learning the skills companies are
25 looking for. The result is hurting our

1 ability to grow and attract good-paying jobs.

2 In one school district facilities are in
3 such need of repair that, when it rains, they
4 have to put down wooden pallets just so
5 students can walk to class. In my school
6 district our bus fleet is so old that, when we
7 had two spare buses break down, we had no
8 extra buses. We had to actually borrow buses
9 from neighboring districts just to make our
10 routes.

11 And right here in your area in
12 Brookhaven and Lincoln County, your schools
13 have been shortchanged \$21 million since 2008.
14 That's enough money for 60 new teachers for
15 ten years. Just let that sink in. Sixty new
16 teachers for ten years.

17 It's stories like these in schools all
18 across our state that harm our kids, that sell
19 us short, and that scare companies away from
20 doing business with us in Mississippi. We can
21 do better, though. We can have better
22 schools, better jobs, and a better future for
23 our kids and our state.

24 So what is Initiative 42? Nearly
25 200,000 Mississippians from every county and

1 both political parties signed petitions to
2 place Initiative 42 on this year's ballot.
3 This is a bipartisan people's movement.
4 Mothers, fathers, teachers, business leaders,
5 everyone understands that underfunding our
6 school only damages our state's economy and
7 our future.

8 Initiative 42 will require the
9 legislature to adequately fund Mississippi
10 public schools under the 1997 law they passed.
11 This will help every single school.

12 Opponents of Initiative 42 will tell you
13 that it means one judge in Hinds County, one
14 judge in Bolivar County, one judge in any
15 county will decide how much money our schools
16 will get. That's simply not true. All a
17 judge would do is ensure that the legislature
18 is spending the money on education as required
19 by their own law. Local school boards, you,
20 and your community get the funding, and you
21 set the priorities. This gives you local
22 control and helps keep your property taxes
23 down.

24 Initiative 42 would not require raising
25 taxes or cutting the state budget, period. As

1 stated on every petition signed by nearly
2 200,000 Mississippians last year, funding can
3 be phased in over seven years using general
4 growth revenue from the state budget. Those
5 revenues from our state budget have grown an
6 average of almost 5 percent each year for the
7 past ten years. And, y'all, just a quarter of
8 that growth each year is \$37.5 million
9 dollars. At that rate it would only take
10 seven years to fund the Mississippi Adequate
11 Education Program.

12 It's time to start giving every
13 Mississippi child the education they deserve.
14 Our schools should have sufficient funding to
15 provide each and every child with a 21st
16 Century education so they have the tools they
17 need to either go to college or technical
18 school and the skills that they need to
19 compete for those 21st Century jobs.

20 Better schools will help our state grow.
21 When looking to relocate, companies are
22 increasingly looking for a highly educated
23 work force. Better schools will attract new
24 businesses, help drive economic growth, and
25 strengthen our communities. Better schools

1 will lead to better jobs and higher wages.

2 In November you can decide whether to
3 increase funding of public education or to
4 allow the legislature to continue to underfund
5 our schools. 42 is an investment in our
6 children. 42 is an investment in our state.
7 42 means better schools. It means better
8 jobs, higher wages, and more economic growth.

9 I urge you to study the facts. If you
10 haven't already, go to the 42 for Better
11 Schools website at 42forbetterschools.org.
12 When you go there, you can see exactly how
13 much your local schools have been underfunded.
14 Look it up. Then look at your property tax
15 bill. The two are definitely related. The
16 more that the state underfunds us, the more
17 your local taxes will go up. We can fix that
18 with 42.

19 Talk to your friends; talk to your
20 neighbors. Democrats, Republicans -- it
21 doesn't matter what party you're in.
22 Everybody in Mississippi understands that our
23 schools have been shortchanged, our kids have
24 been shortchanged, and our economy has been
25 shortchanged. And 42 is our chance to really

1 make a difference.

2 Thank you.

3 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Mr. Corder will speak
4 in opposition to Initiative 42.

5 *MR. CORDER:* Good evening. My name is
6 Frank Corder. I want to first thank y'all
7 for having us here. It is a beautiful
8 community.

9 I'd also like to just take a second to
10 recognize those first responders who responded
11 as they did in the last day with the little
12 boy who fell in the well. So they should be
13 very commended for their hard work, and we
14 appreciate their service as well.

15 A little bit about me. My family owns a
16 small business in Pascagoula. I'm a former
17 Pascagoula city councilman. And in that role
18 I vetted and appointed school board members,
19 and I reviewed and I approved school district
20 budgets and tax requests. I'm also a writer
21 and analyst on working with the state and
22 federal politics and government.

23 I have been married for 15 years to my
24 wife, who is a nurse at Ocean Springs
25 Hospital. We have two great children -- a

1 daughter who's in sixth grade and a son who is
2 in third. Both of them attend public school
3 in the Pascagoula School District, just like I
4 did. My children are thankfully doing very
5 well in school. As a matter of fact, today I
6 just got a call. My daughter was appointed to
7 her superintendent's Student Advisory Council.
8 So I'm very proud of her for being involved in
9 her school. Both successfully so far have all
10 made all A's every year. So I'm a very proud
11 dad and brag on them.

12 My wife also attended public schools in
13 Mississippi, as her father served as a pastor,
14 from Natchez to Carthage to Petal to
15 Pascagoula.

16 I'm a youth football coach and a soccer
17 coach and board member and volunteer in my
18 kids' schools. So I, like many of you, have a
19 vested interest in K through 12 educational
20 success in this state.

21 I'm here tonight to speak against
22 Initiative 42. Now, my quick take of
23 Initiative 42 is that, as I've said
24 previously, it's a terrible public policy that
25 has a very real potential of implementing the

1 Robin Hood effect on your local tax dollars.

2 This Ballot Initiative 42, it asks,
3 "Should the state be required to provide for
4 and support an adequate and efficient system
5 of free public schools"? As the average voter
6 and parent, it's hard to say no to that. Yes,
7 you do. Of course you want that. We all want
8 that.

9 The question I've always asked is "why
10 must we be okay with being adequate, with
11 having adequate public schools?" This very
12 notion is against what I want for my children
13 and for my schools. But the trouble with this
14 initiative is in its details. This initiative
15 spells out in the ballot summary exactly what
16 the proponents of this measure intend to do if
17 this passes. They desire to force their will
18 of appropriation by way of litigation. They
19 take the legislature out of the process,
20 taking away your direct vote. It's in essence
21 taxation without representation.

22 The summary reads "This initiative would
23 also authorize the chancery courts of this
24 state to enforce this section with appropriate
25 injunctive relief." The idea here is to

1 create a new right to sue -- appropriation
2 through litigation. Trial lawyers across the
3 state should be jumping for joy.

4 You see, this initiative, it shifts the
5 funding and policy decisions away from the
6 legislative branch, away from those who you
7 elect to represent you in the State
8 Legislature, and places it squarely in the
9 hands of a judge in one county. The same
10 chancery judge, by the way, who already lost
11 at least one case regarding this measure and
12 its alternative language, which we'll get to
13 in a second, and also the same chancery court
14 who has also said that there's no statute, no
15 relevant statute that mandates legislators to
16 automatically vote to allocate each school
17 district 100 percent of the funds estimated
18 under MAEP.

19 So when they say you're breaking the
20 law, they're not breaking the law. A judge
21 has already ruled that that legislation is not
22 breaking the law.

23 In theory and all possible reality,
24 should a school district in, say, Greenwood or
25 Greenville decide they want to be [inaudible],

1 comparing themselves to, say, Brookhaven or
2 Lincoln County or Pascagoula, and then they
3 sued for their fair share of the state
4 educational funding pie, one judge could
5 determine that, yes, they were getting less,
6 and then redistribute those funds away from
7 those successful districts to give it to
8 Greenwood, Greenville, wherever it may be,
9 essentially playing Robin Hood with your tax
10 dollars.

11 Now, Robin Hood may have been a great
12 children's tale, but it makes for horrible
13 public policy. That's why there are so many
14 voices lined up against Initiative 42. And
15 it's not just legislators in Jackson; it's
16 local people. It's your friends and
17 neighbors. It's state employees and agency
18 heads. It's community college and university
19 presidents and professors, small business
20 owners, business and industry leaders, and
21 just this week the Mississippi State Medical
22 Association. Just about every major trade and
23 industry association is reviewing the
24 ramifications of this initiative; and many, if
25 not most, have or will weigh in opposing this

1 initiative come November.

2 why? Is it because they hate our
3 children or they want to shortchange our
4 public schools? Do they want our state's
5 future leaders, their future employees to come
6 out of school ill prepared for college or for
7 the work force? Absolutely not. What they
8 realize is that this initiative takes your
9 voice, takes your rights away to be heard in
10 Jackson, and puts it in one court in one
11 county in this state. So that's who's against
12 this initiative.

13 Now, who's politically behind this?
14 Because this is a political initiative. Who's
15 pushing this effort across our state and why
16 is it before you today? Most of you have
17 never heard of the New Venture Fund. This
18 fund is a Washington, D.C., based -- a
19 Washington, D.C., based 501(c)(3). And
20 according to its own website, it promotes
21 three things -- health programs, such as
22 including human rights, development aid,
23 family planning. And it also supports groups
24 who fund planned parenthood. It also supports
25 environmental programs, which include climate

1 change initiatives, fossil fuel production.
2 It also supports education programs, which
3 included in there is supports common core.
4 Many in this state have a problem with common
5 core.

6 But the connection between what New
7 Venture Fund fiscally supports in liberal
8 causes globally, including the efforts of
9 planned parenthood and its supporters, cannot
10 be denied. It's prevalent throughout the list
11 of New Venture Fund's contributions.

12 I would encourage every Mississippi
13 voter headed to the polls this November to ask
14 the question of why such a globally liberally
15 supportive group is pumping millions into our
16 state to influence your child's education and
17 our appropriation process.

18 One thing is for sure: Better Jobs,
19 Better Schools, by virtue of the financial
20 support it's taking, and the parts of folks on
21 the staff, is nothing more than a better
22 funded front for Democrats in this state. And
23 why? Because in 2011, after 140 years of
24 Democratic control, they lost power.

25 The truth is MAEP was passed under a

1 Democratic governor and in the hands of a
2 legislature that had Democratic control. why
3 didn't such an initiative come about then?
4 I'll tell you: Because they were in charge.
5 And now that they aren't, here we are.

6 So the reasons this initiative is in
7 front of us now are purely political. It's a
8 power play. And they are using our children
9 as pawns and tugging at your heartstrings to
10 help the cause.

11 You see, you've been told that the
12 legislature has shortchanged and cheated our
13 students. None of that is true. It sounds
14 good if you're campaigning, but it's not true.
15 It's easy to run a campaign on emotion. It
16 sells. Floorboards, buses, roofs. It's
17 emotional tugging. It may be true, but the
18 facts aren't there for this initiative. If
19 you read the initiative, if you look at what
20 the initiative says, the facts of what they're
21 saying is not there.

22 what you probably have not been told is
23 that from fiscal year 2009 until 2013,
24 revenues remained in our state below 2008
25 levels by \$1.1 billion. why is this

1 significant? Because the revenue that 42 uses
2 as their argument, that \$1.1 billion never
3 actually hit state coffers. It was never in
4 the bank in the first place. Their fiscal
5 premise stating that you're owed this much
6 money isn't even there. It's faulty from the
7 start.

8 Something else you probably haven't been
9 told: Over the past four years our
10 legislature has increased education funding at
11 all levels by \$395 million. \$288 million of
12 that was an increase in K through 12 funding.
13 Of this amount, 225 million was an increase
14 just in MAEP alone. And in that figure, the
15 second highest teacher pay raise in the
16 state's history, an increase of \$3500 in July
17 of 2015. Yet backers of 42, they don't want
18 to discuss this. They want to dismiss this,
19 this investment in our teachers and our
20 students.

21 There's also been a \$70 million to
22 increase universities and \$36 million to
23 increase community colleges. That's a total
24 of \$395 million, a historically high record of
25 state funding for education.

1 And, by the way, here locally in Lincoln
2 County there's been no tax increase, no new
3 request for local funds through ad valorem
4 taxes, but yet you're told that your taxes are
5 going up. Not true.

6 And it should be noted every Democrat
7 and every Republican in the State House voted
8 for this, along with all but three of the
9 state senators.

10 So voting no on Initiative 42 isn't a
11 vote against our children and our schools as
12 they would like you to feel. Voting no is a
13 vote for fiscal standing and the rightful
14 spending of our tax dollars from the Coast to
15 Corinth through the legislative process and
16 not through a judge.

17 with this as a background and
18 understanding the powers at play and in our
19 state who's pushing this effort, I would urge
20 you to vote no on 42 come November.

21 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Corder.

22 I want to acknowledge with us today,
23 there's Lea Anne right here, and she did all
24 those publications you see. works really,
25 really hard, and has been to all eight of

1 these and has traveled around the state.

2 And I want to thank the members of the
3 Mississippi Highway Patrol who lost one of
4 theirs due to a heart attack just yesterday or
5 the day before. We appreciate y'all coming
6 tonight. Thank you very much. Our
7 condolences to you.

8 So with that, we will -- did Bobby come
9 in? Representative Moak? There he is. I got
10 your note, and we'll ask Representative Moak
11 to speak.

12 So we'll now turn to Initiative 42A, and
13 it is on your handout that's in your chair
14 there. And so we'll ask Mr. Corder to speak
15 in favor of Measure 42A.

16 *MR. CORDER:* So why should you support
17 42A, the alternative to 42? As I outlined
18 previously, I believe there are real harmful
19 public policy precedents and fiscal dangers
20 for our state if 42 passes come November.
21 42A does not have the language that pushes
22 the appropriation authority over to a judge.

23 You have your forms in front of you on
24 your seats. If you will, take it out. The
25 actual current Section 201 is listed in

1 Amendment 42A. 42A allows the legislature,
2 the rightful body where our tax dollars are
3 appropriated, "to provide for the
4 establishment, maintenance, and support of an
5 effective system of public schools" under
6 general law. 42 takes away the word
7 "legislature" and the word "general law" and
8 adds the "courts." 42 takes out the word
9 "legislature" and the words "general law."
10 That should be noted.

11 I don't know about you, but the language
12 in 42A, in general, is far more cohesive, far
13 better than 42.

14 Do you want adequate schools funded
15 through litigation, through judges, or do you
16 want effective schools funded by our
17 representatives?

18 And did you know MAEP is calculated --
19 the funding for MAEP is calculated on C-level
20 school districts? If we are reaching beyond
21 C -- reaching for a B by chance -- funding
22 actually drops by \$91 million if we fund at a
23 B level. If we got really great and wanted to
24 fund at an A level, funding actually drops by
25 \$60 million. That's striking if you ask me.

1 I want to be great. I want to be A-level
2 schools. But why are these other school
3 districts that make A's and B's able to manage
4 their money a little better? Because they
5 have better accountability. I will take the
6 latter every time, effective school districts.

7 I believe a vote against 42 and for 42A
8 is a vote to keep the courts out of your
9 child's education. Parents and voters, not a
10 judge, should decide what's best for our
11 schools. You see, to try and stem the tide of
12 making a very poor decision for our state, the
13 legislature gave us as parents and voters an
14 alternative to their madness that is
15 Initiative 42.

16 Backers of 42 never intended to have to
17 explain or debate their proposal. They wanted
18 you to take it at face value. The last thing
19 they wanted was for anyone to actually vet the
20 actual language. They never thought that the
21 legislature would muster the political will,
22 the political courage, or have the good sense
23 to propose an alternative. Yet they did, and
24 here we are. 42A shines a bright light on
25 what's really proposed for our Constitution

1 with the original measure. And when you peel
2 back the onion, it's not pretty.

3 People were told that those petitions
4 you signed for 42 were about four things or
5 so -- funding, MAEP, general fund growth, and
6 seven-year increments. None of these are
7 specifically addressed in this initiative.
8 Read it for yourself. It's in the chairs.
9 why? It could have been. They could have
10 included it in that Section 201 language, but
11 they didn't. Because there's more at play
12 here than what they want to tell you. It goes
13 back to my previous comments on 42.

14 It's truly unfortunate that these
15 petitions were signed and collected most
16 likely based on what the petitioners were told
17 that the initiative did, which in reality it
18 doesn't do. Knowing this, backers of 42
19 panicked and began using those millions of
20 out-of-state moneys to create a narrative that
21 demonized the legislature for offering an
22 alternative to their scheme. Quite simply,
23 they didn't want to have to explain to the
24 voters what they were really up to.

25 Both the State House and Senate passed

1 42A. The same law that allows the initiative
2 process also allows an alternative for this
3 very reason. And thank goodness that it does.
4 If not for 42A, Initiative 42 could have
5 sailed through without anyone knowing what was
6 truly at stake.

7 For example, you have been told that 42
8 would do some things that the actual language
9 shows it would not. Such as, for example,
10 "All it does is force the legislature to fully
11 fund MAEP." It's not in there. Not true.
12 MAEP and funding are never mentioned.

13 "Funding can be phased in." It's not in
14 there. When you add the constitutional
15 wording to Section 201, it is not in there.
16 This is only if a court allows it, they say.
17 They won't tell you it's required to have
18 court action because it removes "legislature"
19 and the words "general law."

20 The legislature already is funding
21 education -- over the last four years at
22 least -- at around 26 percent of general fund
23 growth. That's at a faster pace than what
24 they said they want at 25 percent. But,
25 again, 25 percent is not in the amendment.

1 They say if the legislature doesn't
2 break the law, there won't be a need for court
3 at all. Not true again. First, a court has
4 already ruled -- they've already ruled that
5 the legislature is not breaking their own law.
6 Because, as noted, the law itself does not
7 require funding absent consideration of
8 available resources.

9 Second, the initiative is not tied to
10 MAEP or funding at all. Anyone can be sued
11 based on adequate or efficient. Not just the
12 state, but your local school boards, your
13 local school districts playing Robin Hood with
14 your tax dollars, or courts to enforce
15 curriculum and staffing needs or, by all
16 means, district consolidation. The
17 legislature is not even mentioned in 42, nor
18 is general law.

19 would you want a court to decide to
20 consolidate your local school district with a
21 neighboring district? I highly doubt it.

22 Petitioners were also told that 42
23 brings back local control. It does not. It
24 does the exact opposite. It's an assault on
25 representative democracy. Decisions will be

1 made by someone you can't even vote for. If
2 it passes, all state education policy
3 decisions are in the hands of a judge. So
4 don't complain to Ms. Doty or Mr. Moak; talk
5 to the judge. Of course, the only way to do
6 that is to hire a lawyer; which, as I said
7 earlier, may be the key here, to help buoy the
8 trial lawyer business.

9 So why would Initiative 42 -- what would
10 Initiative 42 do about funding even though
11 it's not directly defined? The short answer
12 is no one knows, because only a court can say.
13 It's not written in the amendment.

14 The last thing the legislature wants to
15 do is to allow the courts to dictate funding
16 if they can help it. Appropriations chairman
17 Representative Herb Frierson said, "If 42
18 passes, they will seek to fully fund MAEP in a
19 good-faith effort and stay out of court. What
20 this means in fiscal reality is that other
21 state agencies in funding will take a
22 significant hit, which will have a ripple
23 effect across the state."

24 Ironically, rather than being welcomed
25 news, Initiative 42 backers, what did they do?

1 Did they say "Yay"? No. They screamed and
2 hollered with outrage that Mr. Frierson, a
3 long-time educator himself, was asking for
4 state agencies to plan a 7.8 percent cut
5 should 42 pass. They said he was using scare
6 tactics by threatening to fully fund MAEP.
7 Really? That's what you wanted. Right? why?
8 why act this way? Because they too understand
9 what it means in dollars and cents for our
10 state and how devastating it would be to our
11 state budget.

12 So 42A, the alternative, is a far better
13 option to maintaining a strong, healthy,
14 fiscally responsible, fiscally sane state
15 budget. It keeps your voice in the education
16 process by maintaining taxation with direct
17 representation. It calls for effective public
18 schools, giving our legislators a directive to
19 provide resources as fiscally able without
20 handing those decisions over to one judge in
21 one part of the state.

22 I urge you to vote no to 42 and to vote
23 yes for 42A to continue having your voice
24 heard in our education system in this state.

25 Thank you.

1 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Corder.
2 Ms. Mitchell will speak against 42A.

3 *MS. MITCHELL:* Before I begin, I would
4 like to address a few points brought up by
5 Mr. Corder.

6 First, who's behind Initiative 42? I
7 can tell you who's behind Initiative 42.
8 200,000 Mississippians who signed those
9 petitions who want the legislature to do their
10 job.

11 Every single time Mr. Corder mentions a
12 judge -- every single time -- he's
13 presupposing that the legislature will not
14 follow their law again. It never has to go to
15 court. It never has to go before a judge if
16 they will simply follow their own 1997 law.

17 And, by the way, consolidation happens
18 now by the legislators. We don't have to be
19 threatened by a judge.

20 Lastly, about the language in the
21 constitutional amendment, he is correct; the
22 seven-year phase-in plan is not in the
23 amendment. But do you know what else is not
24 in the amendment? The fact that they will
25 fund MAEP in one year like they're threatening

1 to do so they can raise your taxes and cut the
2 state budget. That's nowhere in the amendment
3 either.

4 Now, against 42A, I would like all of
5 you to know that never before in the 198-year
6 history of our state has the Mississippi
7 Legislature ever, ever gone against the will
8 of the people by placing an alternative on the
9 ballot against an initiative measure. Never.
10 Not one time one of those initiatives that
11 Mr. Hosemann talked about earlier, never have
12 they ever proposed an alternative until now.
13 And it never happened until nearly 200,000
14 Mississippi citizens signed those petitions
15 saying they wanted a constitutional amendment
16 to force the legislature to obey its own law
17 and fully fund our public schools.

18 42A was placed on the ballot by the
19 legislature for one purpose and one purpose
20 only, and that was to divide the supporters of
21 public education so Initiative 42 will not get
22 the percentage of votes needed to amend our
23 State Constitution. In other words, it is a
24 trick. And I don't want any of you to fall
25 for it.

1 You will have two choices when you enter
2 the voting booth on November 3rd. Your first
3 choice is whether or not to amend the State
4 Constitution. The Constitution needs to be
5 amended, because right now it gives the
6 legislature control over public school funding
7 with no accountability. None. Voters who
8 want that accountability for fully funding our
9 schools must vote yes for the constitutional
10 amendment.

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

18 The author of 42A did not place it on
19 the ballot in the hope that it would even
20 pass. He has admitted this publicly. He did
21 it to split the votes of those who favor an
22 amendment so that neither amendment will even
23 pass. By putting 42A on the ballot, the
24 legislature simply thumbed its nose at the
25 hundreds of thousands of Mississippians who

1 signed the petitions for 42.

2 Do not be fooled. 42A keeps the status
3 quo. 42A allows the legislature to continue
4 to underfund our schools. 42A is against
5 adequate funding. 42A says yes to unsafe
6 buses, yes to leaky roofs, yes to less
7 training for our teachers, and it does not one
8 thing to improve our public schools. Nothing.
9 In fact, 42A budgets no additional money for
10 public education. Only Initiative 42 will
11 hold our legislators accountable to fulfill
12 their promise that they made to make education
13 funding a priority.

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

21 The politicians in Jackson and their
22 lobbyists will tell you that one judge in
23 Hinds County, one judge here or there will
24 decide how much money your school district
25 will get. Again, the fact is one judge has

1 never had the final say on anything that one
2 side or the other didn't like. The
3 nine-member State Supreme Court has always had
4 the final word.

5 But you know what? Every bit of this is
6 irrelevant if lawmakers will simply follow
7 their own law. The fact is if you don't break
8 the law, you don't go to court.

9 The politicians in Jackson and their
10 lobbyists will tell you that they have to cut
11 the state budget or raise your taxes if you
12 force them to follow their own law. But go
13 look at your county tax bill and see how much
14 it's gone up in the past ten years. It may
15 not have gone up in Lincoln County, but I can
16 assure you it's gone up in my county.

17 All of those same politicians will not
18 do their job and follow the law.

19 Guys, the money is there for our schools
20 without cutting the state budget and without
21 raising your taxes. And, yes, it can be done
22 responsibly over seven years just like the
23 back of the petition stated. It's just a
24 matter of priorities. It's as simple as that.

25 You should seriously go look at some of

1 the things that our lawmakers have spent money
2 on. Millions and millions of dollars wasted
3 on projects that have gone bust. You wouldn't
4 believe the crazy stuff they've spent money
5 on, money that could have gone to our public
6 schools -- should have gone to our public
7 schools. Every single story those politicians
8 in Jackson and their hobbyists will tell you
9 is indeed based on fear and scare tactics that
10 have zero bases in fact.

11 Just ask yourself. I mean, why would
12 they work so hard to confuse you on an issue
13 as important as public education? Maybe it's
14 because they're scared to death of losing
15 their control and their power to tell you how
16 to run your schools. Sometimes I think
17 politicians get confused about who works for
18 whom.

19 In closing, on November 3rd you have the
20 chance to take back control of your schools by
21 voting for Initiative 42. You have a chance
22 to tell the legislature that you will not be
23 fooled by 42A. You have a chance to hold
24 those politicians accountable for fully
25 funding our public schools just like they

1 promised. And you have a chance to show the
2 kids of Mississippi that there is not one
3 thing more important than an education,
4 because better schools means better jobs; it
5 means higher wages; and it means more economic
6 growth for our state.

7 So on November 3rd, when you walk in
8 that voting booth, say yes to the one true
9 choice for better public schools, and that is
10 Initiative 42.

11 Thank you.

12 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you.

13 Shannon Eubanks. Mr. Eubanks is from
14 Brookhaven, and he rises in support of
15 Initiative 42.

16 *MR. EUBANKS:* My name is Shannon
17 Eubanks. I'm from Brookhaven, Mississippi.
18 I am the principal of Enterprise Attendance
19 Center. I have two daughters in our public
20 schools. I am married to a public school
21 educator. And I do rise in support of
22 Initiative 42.

23 Folks, Lincoln County Schools is a B
24 school district. It is also rated as the top
25 school district for the lowest per-pupil cost

1 in Mississippi. We have squeezed turnips and
2 made them bleed to get where we are. We have
3 efficiency. We have effectiveness. What we
4 do not have is adequacy.

5 I'm tired of leaking roofs. I'm tired
6 of buses breaking down every week and having
7 to scrounge to try to find one. I'm tired of
8 having awnings that we cannot fix because we
9 do not have the funds. I'm tired of telling
10 my teachers to continue to work harder and
11 harder because we don't have enough for them.
12 I'm tired of telling parents that we can't
13 offer programs because we don't have the
14 funds. I'm tired of my own daughters not
15 having what affluent communities have because
16 the funding's not there.

17 Don't tell me that Lincoln County, we're
18 wasting money. We've shown if we can't get it
19 done, it can't be done. But let me tell you
20 this, voters: If we don't do something --
21 more and more is being asked of us; we can't
22 continue. We're a B district; but if it
23 continues, we're going to be a C, because we
24 can't keep up.

25 The taxes that you're not having to pay,

1 the raises in taxes haven't gone up, guess
2 what? There will be a tax increase coming in
3 the next few years if something does not
4 change.

5 Folks, all we're asking is the law says
6 this -- to fund education. But there's a
7 loophole. It was written in there
8 specifically so that if the legislature chose
9 not to fully fund education by their formula,
10 they don't have to do it. 42 closes the
11 loophole. It says, "Oh, no. We're going to
12 take that out, and you will fund it."

13 If you don't like MAEP, fine. Come up
14 with something else. I've talked to
15 legislators. I've said, "Please come up with
16 something else if it doesn't work." But don't
17 hide behind the formula and not fully fund our
18 schools. And for Lincoln County Schools
19 that's \$1.3 million last year. That's \$11
20 million since 2008. In my school that's over
21 a quarter of a million dollars.

22 what could I do with a quarter of a
23 million dollars? well, I could take care of
24 my facilities. I could hire more teachers. I
25 could offer art, something we don't have. I

1 might could even start a band. There's a lot
2 that we can do. But what we're doing is
3 squeezing. And, folks, there's nowhere else
4 for me to cut. Nowhere else for Lincoln
5 County Schools to cut. Nowhere else there is
6 to find a way to squeeze it out. It comes
7 down to priorities.

8 I graduated from the Mississippi School
9 for Mathematics and Science. There was a time
10 when we made education a priority. MSA was
11 founded when we decided to make it a priority.
12 This is the time again.

13 I ask you to vote for Initiative 42.

14 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you, Mr. Eubanks.

15 Benjamin Franklin from Bolton.

16 Mr. Franklin is opposed to Initiative 42.

17 *MR. FRANKLIN:* Thank you,

18 Mr. Secretary.

19 My name is Johnny Franklin. For 46 of
20 the 48 years that I've lived in Mississippi as
21 an adult, I've spent those years working in
22 the -- directly in public schools of the
23 state -- teacher, coach, middle school, high
24 school principal, central office, and then as
25 a statewide advocate for children.

1 My only concern about this initiative is
2 what happens to our children? what I came
3 here tonight to do -- two things. One, it's
4 kind of like what Paul Harvey said -- some of
5 you aren't old enough to remember Paul Harvey,
6 but Paul Harvey talks about the other -- the
7 rest of the story. And I'm going to twist
8 that a bit to say the other side of the story.

9 I'm not here to try to convince you on
10 how you should vote when you go in that voting
11 booth. what I want to do is to share some
12 information based on five points that I hope
13 will at least give you some information to
14 make a choice of your own determination when
15 you go into that voting booth.

16 The first point is that we have got to
17 focus on children. And, folks, that hasn't
18 happened in a long time because we are so
19 preoccupied and tied up with -- both the
20 education community, the advocacy community,
21 and the policymaking community -- on talking
22 about nothing but MAEP.

23 when I was doing a little policy work, I
24 asked the question, "why don't we ever talk
25 about children?" And it was kind of meant as

1 a joke, but I'm going to share that little
2 joke with you. They said, "Children don't
3 count because they don't vote and they don't
4 lobby."

5 But if you go to Jackson or you -- and
6 that's from the education community policy and
7 the advocacy community. Children are not put
8 first. It's fully funding the Holy Grail of
9 MAEP. I think it's time that we shift and put
10 all the emphasis on our children and their
11 performance outcomes.

12 Keeping MAEP as a major talking point
13 also helps mask what's really happening to our
14 children in the K-12 system.

15 And Point No. 3 here, I want to try to
16 share with you what's happened to our
17 children. Money is not education's biggest
18 problem. It's one of several excuses for
19 what's happened to our children and their
20 performance outcome. We tend to have a number
21 of things that we say. "Well, our children
22 can't learn." Our children are victims of low
23 expectations and have been for a number of
24 years.

25 Also, there's no research showing a

1 direct correlation between increasing funding
2 and automatically, if you increase the money,
3 that the children perform better. It's just
4 not out there. People think that or associate
5 that or try to use that, but look at the
6 research. I'm trying to give you some factual
7 information, and you can do with it as you
8 choose.

9 Point No. 2: Do any of you have any
10 idea how much total money goes to support our
11 state's K-12 system? Total money from state,
12 local, and federal sources supported by the
13 poorest state and the taxpayers who live in
14 that state, we spend 4 1/2 -- give or take --
15 \$4.5 billion dollars. And MAEP is just a part
16 of that. We invest \$4.5 billion dollars into
17 our K-12 system.

18 The states have raised education funding
19 over the last several years by a great amount
20 of money, multiple hundreds of million
21 dollars.

22 Now, let me give you a little input or a
23 little information on where it's gone. At the
24 base of MAEP funding is a term called "base
25 student cost." And on the base student cost

1 increases -- and most educators want to go
2 back to 2008 because that was the year of real
3 high funding, probably the highest year of
4 funding. But if you look at what's happened
5 to base student policy between 2008 and 2015,
6 here it is. And these are the four
7 categories. Instruction. The instruction
8 category, which is basically our teachers and
9 what happens in the classroom for the
10 difference it made, have gone up 7 percent.
11 Administration has gone up 46 percent. Plant
12 and maintenance has gone up 28 percent.
13 Ancillary support has gone up 15 percent.

14 So if you look and believe in the
15 research, the research says that the greatest
16 return on our investment of resources is in
17 having a quality teacher in the classrooms.
18 So if you value that -- now, education
19 leadership thought that -- that goes contrary
20 to what the facts are between 2008 to 2015 on
21 the way it's been invested. The investment's
22 in administration rather than on those
23 classroom teachers.

24 I want to share another thing with you.
25 we talk about -- sometimes we have these

1 discussions in Jackson and around the state.
2 They talk about it's time to give MAEP full
3 funding because the state's filling up -- the
4 legislature's filling up the state's rainy day
5 fund. You understand rainy day fund are the
6 state's reserves that they're holding in case
7 there's a downward turn in the revenue. And
8 with the unpredictability of revenue, it's
9 awfully difficult. The budgeting job that
10 those folks face is very difficult. But at
11 one time -- the state pushes to try to have
12 \$400 million in a rainy day fund.

13 A couple of years ago -- and I'm going
14 to confess to you I retired two years ago, so
15 my data is not as up to date as it was at one
16 time. And I'm a data hound. I like it, and I
17 dug deep into it. And what I used to tell my
18 friends in the education community is, "If
19 we're going to talk about this stuff, just
20 remember that I'm looking at this stuff too.
21 So if we're going to talk about it, let's just
22 talk about it like it is," you know.

23 Heres the deal: At that time educators
24 have three funds that are like reserve funds
25 in some shape, form, or fashion. One is

1 called fund balance. And I know that the
2 first thing somebody's going to say, "well,
3 that's not a savings account." You're right,
4 but it is money that districts have. Now,
5 this is statewide, y'all. And I know some
6 folks don't have much fund balance. I'm fully
7 aware that this is a broad brush statewide.

8 But at that time, the last time I looked
9 at it, between fund balance, 16th section
10 interest funds -- which are like cash -- and
11 16th section principal funds -- which do have
12 stipulations and requirements that you have to
13 meet to be able to spend those -- but the K-12
14 system, the districts in K-12 had almost
15 \$1 billion in those three funds. But the cry
16 was, "Give us those. Don't be putting that
17 money in the state rainy day fund." So
18 let's -- if we're going to talk about it,
19 let's talk about everybody's reserves.

20 Now --

21 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Mr. Franklin, you need
22 to stop finishing up here.

23 *MR. FRANKLIN:* All right.

24 Expenditures in high-performing
25 districts are the lowest expenditures; the

1 Lowest performing districts, the highest.

2 Bang for the buck. What do the poorest
3 taxpayers get for that \$4.5 million? You look
4 at state test results that I had access to and
5 that I kept up with -- this is a couple of
6 years old -- 46 percent of the state's
7 third-graders are not proficient in reading;
8 33 percent not proficient in math. On
9 national test results, which is the only thing
10 we have to compare, 78 percent of
11 Mississippi's fourth-graders not proficient in
12 reading; 79 percent of Mississippi's
13 eighth-graders were not proficient in reading.
14 On the state ACT test, only 13 percent of
15 Mississippi students taking the ACT meet all
16 four college and career requisites.

17 Now, I want to shift here real quickly.
18 I believe strongly in public education. I've
19 been a product of it. All five of my
20 daughters were. My wife's a teacher. But I
21 believe there's a better way than having a
22 progressive formula; progressive meaning that
23 the more you put into it, the more is spent
24 and the more is required. Every time you
25 raise the amount of money that goes through

1 the MAEP formula, next year the formula is
2 bigger.

3 I recommend that we pull together some
4 smart folks from the education leadership
5 community, from the education policymaker
6 community, and advocates. And I guarantee
7 there are folks sitting in this room now who
8 do an outstanding job in allocating resources
9 that could be a part of something so that we
10 could have what I call a practical, easily
11 understood, straightforward method of funding
12 students at an adequate level.

13 We need to focus on the areas for
14 improving students' outcomes and get away from
15 the Holy Grail. MAEP is a progressive
16 approach. MAEP was developed as a political
17 legacy effort and remains a political football
18 today.

19 Now, the last point. On Ballot
20 Initiative 42, it's not about improving
21 student outcomes; it's not about putting
22 children first. You just don't hear what's
23 going on with children. It's all about money,
24 funds, and MAEP.

25 This is, I contend, not a Mississippi

1 grassroots efforts, because if you look at the
2 money, the approximately \$2 million that the
3 Better Schools, Better Jobs or 42 through the
4 New Venture fund in Washington and the
5 Southern Education finances in Atlanta, that
6 came from Washington and Atlanta. That didn't
7 come from folks in Mississippi.

8 Allowing the chancery courts -- and some
9 folks want to say that's just Hinds County,
10 but I guarantee you if that language goes in,
11 then chancery courts all over this state,
12 you're going to have a judicial and a legal
13 litigation frenzy.

14 So my only concern and my plea with you
15 today is vote your conscience. Vote an
16 informed decision just like you do when you
17 vote for a mayor or for a legislator, et
18 cetera. And let's get about educating our
19 children so that this state will have a future
20 and those children will have a future as
21 adults.

22 Thank you for listening.

23 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Ms. Taplin, Etta
24 Taplin. From Ruth, Mississippi.

25 *MS. TAPLIN:* Good evening. Can you

1 hear me? Okay.

2 I am a product of public education. My
3 husband is a product of public education. Our
4 children are products of public education.
5 And if we survey most of the people in this
6 room, you are probably a product of public
7 education also. So now why all of a sudden
8 public education don't work?

9 I'm on the North Pike School Board. We
10 live rooftop to rooftop. We make it work. My
11 former superintendent is sitting in here, so
12 he knows exactly what North Pike did. He was
13 there for 17 1/2 years. My current
14 superintendent sitting at North Pike.

15 We have no big industry, but we educate
16 our children. And to hear that we don't care
17 about our children makes me upset. We fight
18 tirelessly, tirelessly at North Pike and Pike
19 County and every county in the state of
20 Mississippi to make sure that children are
21 educated day in and day out. Never before
22 have I seen an initiative put on the ballot
23 that the people have spoken and the
24 legislators decide that they want to issue an
25 alternative because they don't like what the

1 people say?

2 I thought this was our way to get things
3 done; that we were doing it the right way. We
4 were trying to play fair. Where is the
5 fairness in this? There is none.

6 Our children are our most important
7 resources, but we hear 42A? How can you say
8 that? How can you say that our children are
9 not important? How can you say that they are
10 not the most important resource in the state
11 of Mississippi?

12 I have leaky roofs; I have old school
13 buses just like everybody else in here. My
14 teachers are worked to death, as everybody
15 else in here. If you work in a public school
16 in Mississippi, you work from can't to can't.
17 My husband is a superintendent. My daughter
18 taught school. My son is a college educator.
19 So don't tell me that we don't love our
20 children. Don't tell me that education isn't
21 important in Mississippi, because it is.

22 Our legislators need to stop playing
23 and understand why they are elected. They are
24 elected for the people and to listen to the
25 people.

1 We need everyone to vote for Initiative
2 42. We need to let the legislators know that
3 we are the voice of Mississippi and that our
4 children are our first priorities. I
5 encourage each and every one of you here to do
6 this.

7 Someone mentioned the \$395 million that
8 was spent -- that was given for teacher pay
9 raise. All of that didn't go to a teacher pay
10 raise. We are already on the bottom. How
11 long did it take to get that raise? The most
12 important people who teach our children every
13 day are getting paid the least amount of
14 money, as most people are. If you're a public
15 servant, you get paid pennies.

16 You talked about administration
17 auxiliaries. We aren't top heavy in North
18 Pike. And most of you that are educators in
19 here and administrators, you probably aren't
20 either. We have people doing three and four
21 jobs. They go to school at 7:00 in the
22 morning, and they may not leave until 7 at
23 night. But no one wants to acknowledge that.

24 So I'm asking you please support
25 Initiative 42. Do not listen to the rhetoric

1 that you're hearing because all of it is not
2 true. Half truth, whole lies. Please vote
3 for Initiative 42.

4 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Julie Winckler from
5 Jackson. Ms. Winckler.

6 *MS. WINCKLER:* Thank you. My name is
7 Julie. I work for the Parents' Campaign.
8 We're an advocacy organization in Jackson.
9 We care very much about children.

10 I do this work -- I care about children
11 not because I do this work; I do this work
12 because I care about, first, my own children.
13 My oldest son is in first grade in public
14 education -- in public schools. And about two
15 years ago when we started this process, he did
16 a pre-K program. I started doing all the
17 things that good parents in public schools do,
18 which is fundraise. I started collecting
19 boxtops, selling raffle tickets, buying
20 carnations. And I don't mind doing that. I
21 think I should have to pitch in to make sure
22 he's successful.

23 But what I realized was that things that
24 really make the difference for my child's
25 education, the things that I really want for

1 him, first of all, is a smaller class size. I
2 don't think we should ask teachers to manage
3 25 kindergarteners at one time. I personally
4 would be scared to death to do that, even with
5 an assistant.

6 I don't think that we should have -- and
7 we have very high standards. We've been doing
8 some homework already in first grade that I
9 find a little challenging, actually. I think
10 we have got some pretty high standards, and I
11 don't know how my child can learn when he's
12 competing with 24 other kids for attention.
13 If you have small children, you know that they
14 are in that class sitting on a rug and they're
15 all raising their hands like this because they
16 just want to be called on, and the teacher
17 cannot do that with all those kids.

18 So that's what I can't buy with boxtops.
19 I can't buy smaller class sizes. I can't get
20 an art teacher. I can't get a PE teacher. I
21 can't improve some other things about my
22 school building. I mean, we try. We'll buy a
23 little playground equipment or some things.
24 And we're probably not going to fix that leaky
25 roof.

1 So I realized this is kind of a futile
2 effort when I think about what I really want
3 for my child. And that's when I started
4 paying attention to the legislature and
5 realized, "Oh, there's a law on the books that
6 tells us exactly what we should be funding our
7 schools, and we don't fund it."

8 And I went to meet with my senator, and
9 I told him, "This is my big issue. Are we
10 going to get that right this year?"

11 And he said, "I don't think there's a
12 political will."

13 That is the problem -- that we depend on
14 political will to fund our schools. And what
15 this amendment does is it takes out the
16 provision that says "as the legislature shall
17 prescribe." We should not allow Democrats or
18 Republicans in either party to prescribe what
19 they want to our schools. We should have a
20 baseline -- y'all, we're not even at the
21 baseline right now. We should have a baseline
22 funding level, and it should be part of our
23 state budget that cannot be negotiated.

24 Now, the legislature, despite what
25 you've heard tonight, will still be in charge

1 of setting the law that tells us what is
2 adequate. When the word "adequate" is in that
3 amendment, we have a definition for that, and
4 it's the legislature's job to define that.
5 And so they'll still have that control. But
6 once they've defined it in whatever way they
7 see fit -- because we're leaving that open for
8 flexibility. This is philosophically we
9 believe in funding public schools. So, no, we
10 didn't say MAEP in the constitutional
11 amendment. The Constitution is a
12 philosophical document. Of course MAEP is not
13 in it. We're leaving that up to the
14 legislature to determine what is adequate.
15 But once they figure it out, it shouldn't be
16 subject to whatever they want to fund this
17 week or whatever tax cut is popular for them
18 politically.

19 And, by the way, when lawmakers proposed
20 a \$550 million tax cut this session because
21 we're in great financial shape, I didn't hear
22 anybody say, "we're going to have to slash
23 budgets. We're going to have to lay people
24 off." What they are proposing is laying
25 people off. Did they say it that way? No.

1 Because you can't just make up a \$550 million
2 shortfall in revenue and not end up having to
3 cut budgets or raise taxes eventually again.
4 It's just not feasible. But I didn't hear
5 anybody complain about that.

6 what we're asking for is not radical
7 either. If we did it in 2008, we can do it
8 now. The shortfall with MAEP is \$200 million.
9 That's about 2 percent of our entire state
10 budget. Currently K through 12 education is
11 \$2 billion dollars out of our state budget.
12 That's 21 percent. As a percent of our
13 overall state budget, we are going down. We
14 are not spending less as a percent of our
15 overall state budget as we did in 2008.

16 Meanwhile, our entire state budget has
17 grown by about 30 percent. Every other state
18 agency has grown. They all hit their
19 high-water mark a couple of years ago. So to
20 say this year we're spending more money on
21 education than ever, well, everybody else got
22 that privilege a couple of years ago.

23 So I don't think it's too much to ask as
24 a parent, as a voter that my state lawmakers
25 prioritize public education for my own child

1 and for all children. We need the funding to
2 pay for the things that we have heard are
3 required from people who work in public
4 schools. People who are working in public
5 schools and trying to make dollars add up are
6 telling us we have to have more funding. If
7 you are going to rate us and tell us what
8 curriculum we have to use and give us an
9 accountability model, you have to fund our
10 schools adequately. That's part of the deal.
11 They rate us. They have an accountability
12 system. They give us money to do that. But
13 right now the funding piece is missing.

14 So I just want to point out one other
15 thing, which is that this fiscal analysis
16 that's on here, it says, this last sentence --
17 it's very scary -- it says we're going to have
18 to cut budgets, raise taxes "to comply with
19 the court's dictate." Well, there is no
20 court's dictate. There is no court's dictate.
21 There is not. This implies that, as of
22 November 4th, a court will have said, "We must
23 fully fund public schools in 2016." There is
24 no court's dictate that says that. We do not
25 have to do that.

1 There is a written document on the
2 Secretary of State's website that tells us the
3 intent of the amendment, which is a very slow
4 process of reaching full funding over a couple
5 of years. It's clearly stated what the intent
6 is on the Secretary of State's website. There
7 is no court's dictate. We have a clear plan.
8 We know what adequate means. We can find the
9 money in the budget if we just prioritize over
10 a period of time using growth and revenue.

11 The last thing I want to say is I think
12 there's a lot of support in this room, and
13 that's good to see. This is not going to
14 equal the 400,000 votes that we need to get
15 this passed. We have got to work really hard.
16 This is what I'm going to do: I'm going to
17 tell my neighbors; I'm going to tell my
18 friends; I'm going to tell my church family.
19 I'm going to put a yard sign in my yard. I'm
20 going to change my Facebook profile. I'm
21 going to start posting about it on my Facebook
22 page. I'm going to start tweeting about it.
23 These are the things that we all have to do to
24 make this pass. We have got a huge obstacle
25 and we've got a big problem with this 42A.

1 People are going to be confused. Now people
2 are scared they're going to lose their jobs,
3 budget cuts, tax increases.

4 Please tell your friends; please tell
5 your neighbors. Tell everyone their vote
6 really matters. On November 3rd we've got to
7 get hundreds of thousands of people to the
8 polls to get this passed. And that allows --

9 *MR. HOSEMANN:* You need to wrap it up,
10 Ms. Winckler.

11 *MS. WINCKLER:* That allows us as
12 voters to have power, not the other way
13 around. Let's say we don't vote for 42.
14 Then they're promising us what? If we don't
15 vote for 42, will we eventually get full
16 funding? Let's vote for 42. Let's put our
17 children first.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Representative Bobby
19 Moak.

20 *REPRESENTATIVE MOAK:* Mr. Secretary,
21 thank you for coming to Brookhaven during
22 this process. We appreciate you being here.

23 As many of you know, I'm a member of the
24 legislature. I've been there for a while.
25 I've been there for a while, long enough to

1 know that back during the day back in 1983,
2 many of you may remember there was this big
3 issue of school consolidation. Huge. And a
4 lot of us got elected on education issues.
5 And it was a wake-up call, a real wake-up call
6 for this county, southwest Mississippi. And
7 the outcome was that we got some good public
8 schools out of the deal. We also have a good
9 private school just down the road here in
10 Lincoln County too.

11 But, you know, here's the thing: Folks
12 throughout Mississippi -- and especially in
13 our area that I know -- they work really hard.
14 And I think a lot of folks and politicians
15 should have got this, too, because there was a
16 real wake-up call when 200,000 people signed
17 their name on a petition to try to make sure
18 that education is better in all the
19 communities that they are located in.

20 Now, folks, that takes political courage
21 to sign your name to something and put your
22 address down there and who you are and ship
23 that petition to the Secretary of State's
24 office and let him check you off the list and
25 make sure you're good. So those 200,000 folks

1 I really applaud the political courage that
2 they had, because they have a lot more than a
3 lot of folks that I know. And so they've
4 stepped up, and they have made their voice
5 heard. It's not that their voice would be cut
6 out in the legislative process; they just
7 wanted to make sure that their voice got
8 heard. And that was the only way they knew to
9 do it, because heretofore their voice had been
10 heard only a few times during the process of
11 really, really fully funding education in our
12 state.

13 Now, this is not a party thing. All of
14 you know I'm the Democratic leader in the
15 Mississippi House. But it's not Republican;
16 it's not Democrat; it's about four-year-olds
17 and up. That's what it's about. It's about
18 folks who we can send to colleges, our
19 colleges and our community colleges like here
20 nearby.

21 So I would tell you the same thing I
22 tell the members of my caucus. "when we're
23 discussing important issues about
24 Mississippians, leave your party politics at
25 the door. we'll deal with that later."

1 Now, I don't care where your kids go to
2 school -- public school, private school --
3 you've all been shortchanged just like me --
4 and I'm a taxpayer here -- because when the
5 state does not do its part and send money back
6 to the local level, which is our tax dollars,
7 you're making up for that in your local
8 millage taxes. Every time you buy your car
9 tag, every time you pay money on your
10 business, every time you pay money on your
11 house, and when you go to that courthouse and
12 you're paying on your farm and everything
13 else, your taxes are reflected by that.

14 To the extent when we, the legislature,
15 did not fund it just this year, it equates to
16 a hundred bucks a head for everybody in this
17 county approximately. And that's pretty good
18 for southwest Mississippi too. So a family of
19 four, you're looking at about 400 bucks extra
20 that they're going to pay the tax man.

21 And here's what's been happening to your
22 tax money, folks -- because I've been there
23 watching it; to some degree I've participated
24 in some of it because I like economic
25 development -- but let me tell you what the

1 deal is. Here's the plan: Take your tax
2 money, send it to Jackson. Don't send it back
3 to the form of public schools, but take it and
4 give it to who's got the best lobbyist running
5 the halls to give it to the large corporations
6 who don't even pay tax dollars in this state.

7 Now, those are the folks that you see
8 who are out there opposed to this. You know
9 why? Because it's you versus them. Either
10 you get the tax money locally and save us from
11 having to pony up more money out of our pocket
12 or ship it off to somebody else who's got
13 great lobbyists walking the halls of the
14 capitol.

15 So somebody mentioned a while ago you
16 can either be for 42 or 42A. Look, I signed
17 the petition. I'm for 42. I'm not backing up
18 on that deal. And 42A is against.

19 You know, this Friday night we will pack
20 the football stadiums. And there is no reason
21 for us not to pack the poll booth on behalf
22 of our children and vote for 42.

23 Now, I've heard, you know, a few
24 things -- just really quickly, Mr. Secretary,
25 before you gavel me down. I've heard the

1 issue about one judge. Phooey. I led the
2 Democratic caucus in the Shipman case because
3 folks actually believed that that case was
4 only going to go to that one judge in Hinds
5 County in circuit court, and the supreme court
6 yanked it up. And guess what? All nine of
7 those guys got a vote. So I was wrong on
8 that, but you know what it did? It proves to
9 me there ain't no one judge issue that you
10 need to buy into, because that just is not
11 going to happen.

12 The other thing is if 42 passes, you're
13 going to see all of these cuts. I didn't see
14 any cuts when there was a bill that passed the
15 legislature of 1.7 billion this year. I
16 didn't see any cuts and people being called in
17 when the Senate passed another 454 million in
18 tax cuts either. I didn't see any of that
19 happen. Yet, when people decided to raise
20 their voices together in concert and say "Take
21 care of our children for once," I heard all
22 sort of rhetoric about the cuts and the bad
23 things that were just going to come down.

24 Look, the bottom line is this: we have
25 mamas and daddies who put the kids on the bus

1 every morning at 7:00, and we ship them off to
2 people and a teacher that sometimes we don't
3 even know. And they see them when they come
4 back home at the end of the workday when they
5 fix them some dinner. And you're here to tell
6 me that we shouldn't make sure our children
7 that we don't see during the day don't have a
8 safe place, don't have the best people looking
9 after our children, don't have the
10 transportation to get them safely there and
11 back, that don't have a school nurse there,
12 that can't offer them Latin and other arts and
13 the band, as was mentioned up here earlier, or
14 anything else that a child should experience
15 as a curriculum during his going to school,
16 whether it be in first grade or as a senior.
17 You're telling me we shouldn't provide that
18 for children that we will never know but that
19 one day could change our lives.

20 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you.

21 Mr. Keith.

22 *MR. KEITH:* Thank you, Mr. Secretary,
23 for being here again.

24 Let me just tell you -- my name is Jim
25 Keith. I am a school board attorney. I have

1 been practicing law for 32 years representing
2 school districts, and I've seen what's
3 happened in public education over the years.
4 And let's just cut through all the rhetoric.
5 Let's just get down to the brass tacks here.

6 All this is -- all this dispute is all
7 about is the legislature wanting to maintain
8 absolute control with no judicial oversight
9 over what they do with regard to public
10 education. And, folks, that violates our
11 three-branch system of government that our
12 forefathers developed many, many years ago.
13 Because the judiciary has always had the
14 authority to look over the shoulder of the
15 legislature. But with regard to public
16 education, our legislature wants no oversight.

17 Let me tell you how that developed. In
18 1890 we had a constitutional mandate that
19 mandated public education. In 1960 our
20 legislature modified that constitution and
21 took out the mandate language and put in
22 discretionary language and said we "may" fund
23 and support public education. And we know
24 what that was all about in 1960. They
25 included the discretionary language in there

1 to give them absolute control.

2 In 1987 our legislature amended the
3 Constitution one more time and put in that
4 language "upon such conditions as dictated by
5 the legislature." In other words, total
6 discretion.

7 Did you know we are the only state in
8 the United States whose Constitution does not
9 mandate public education? It's total
10 discretion with our legislature. Nobody else
11 does it that way. Nobody. Our legislature
12 for 55 years, since 1960, has had total
13 discretion over the development and the
14 funding and support of public education, and
15 we're in last place. When is the legislature
16 going to take ownership of where we are?

17 I've heard people say, "well, money is
18 not the solution to our problem. You can't
19 keep throwing money at the problem." We have
20 never thrown money at the problem. I even
21 suggested to the speaker that we throw money
22 at the problem for three years; and if a
23 school district doesn't perform, then take
24 them over, but give us the opportunity.

25 One of our -- Mr. Corder up there made a

1 statement, "It is an assault" -- "42 is an
2 assault on representative democracy." I tell
3 you what's an assault on representative
4 democracy, and that is the legislature
5 insisting on having total autonomy with regard
6 to funding public education. They don't want
7 a judge in Jackson or the supreme court -- as
8 we know who will have the final say-so -- they
9 do not want that oversight. But let me tell
10 you they have that oversight in everything
11 else they do. They simply don't want it in
12 public education. That is an assault on
13 representative democracy.

14 Mr. Corder made another statement, "42
15 is horrible public policy." I tell you what's
16 horrible public policy. Horrible public
17 policy is having a formula to fund public
18 education and continually ignoring it and for
19 2 out of 18 years you finally fund it and 16
20 out of 18 you do not? That's horrible public
21 policy.

22 Let me just again cut through all of
23 this. Number one, we know we're on bottom in
24 funding. There's no question about that in
25 this country. Maybe Utah or Nevada or

1 somebody will move below us, and then we'll
2 jockey for a position. I tell you what is
3 shameful, folks: we're here arguing over just
4 enough funding to get us off the bottom. And
5 we're arguing about it. How shameful. If we
6 were moving to the middle of the pack, sure,
7 there would be an argument. We're not asking
8 that. We're simply saying fund it in a way
9 that gets us off the bottom. Is that asking
10 too much? That's not asking too much.

11 The most important mission of a state
12 government is to educate its young people, bar
13 none. That's the most important mission.
14 Public funding -- and funding public education
15 is simply a matter of priorities. Did you
16 know that the legislature tried to amend the
17 rainy day fund formula or the statute to raise
18 the statutory limit from 407 million to over
19 600 million this year? Because we had so much
20 money, they didn't know what to do with it.
21 Fortunately, it did not pass.

22 But where did that extra money go? I
23 can tell you it did not go into public
24 education. Who knows where it went. It did
25 not go into public education. But until we as

1 a state -- and let's just cut through every
2 bit of this -- but until we as a state make
3 public education a priority and quit letting
4 the legislature move the target every year
5 just to suit their political needs, until we
6 make public education a priority, we will
7 never get off the bottom either educationally
8 or economically.

9 I have three daughters who left this
10 state. One is a clinical psychologist; one is
11 an architect; one is a lawyer. None of them
12 live in Mississippi, and none of them are
13 coming back because they do not see the
14 opportunities here. I decided in 1979 to come
15 back to Mississippi and go to law school and
16 then stayed in Mississippi in 1982. So I
17 chose to -- I was born and raised in Laurel,
18 Mississippi, so I'm a native Mississippian.

19 And by the way, I'm a conservative
20 Republican who is for public education. I am
21 not a left-wing liberal Communist as I have
22 been labeled. My mother would roll over in
23 her grave if she heard that.

24 But until we -- and I'll stop because
25 the secretary is going to rein me up here in

1 just a second. We have been underfunding
2 public education, and we have been giving it a
3 short trip for so many years. We have never
4 made it a priority for so many years. Sooner
5 or later we've got to ask ourselves "How's
6 that working out for us?" Not very well.

7 Thank you very much.

8 *MR. HOSEMANN:* We have the last three.

9 And while we're doing that, the lady
10 who's been at every one of these transcribing
11 all of this -- and some speak louder than
12 others, softer than others, and faster than
13 others -- but Sharron Allen. Thank you,
14 Sharron, for all your good work. We
15 appreciate all that you do. She'll have all
16 this transcribed. And as you can tell, it's
17 quite lengthy. We've been here a couple of
18 hours already.

19 The last three. Joyce Helmick, who has
20 spoken before. Ms. Helmick, if you would
21 honor the two or three minutes. We've let
22 some of the others go a little longer tonight.

23 *MS. HELMICK:* Yes, sir.

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

25 Ms. Helmick has spoken, I think, at

1 almost all of them.

2 *MS. HELMICK:* I have. This is my
3 seventh. I missed Hattiesburg.

4 I am a grandmother. My children went to
5 public schools. I went to public schools.
6 And my five-year-old grandson is in
7 kindergarten in Hernando, who informed his mom
8 just the other day, "I don't have to stay at
9 home if I'm sick this year, Mom, because we
10 have a nurse. And she'll come and check on
11 me. You don't have to worry about that."

12 Tonight I stand here in support of
13 Initiative 42 because I am a 37-year veteran
14 educator in Mississippi. Thirty-seven years.

15 I stand here as president of the
16 Mississippi Association of Educators. I left
17 the classroom two years ago, and since then
18 I've been traveling the state and visiting
19 many schools.

20 The Mississippi Association of Educators
21 stands in support of Initiative 42 because we
22 know that it is the only way that our
23 lawmakers will fund our schools and give the
24 resources, the tools, and support that our
25 students need to succeed.

1 I'm here to tell you some truths, but
2 before I do, I want to thank Mr. Hosemann and
3 his staff. Lea Anne and all of your staff
4 have being extremely just wonderful and
5 precious to all of the public people who have
6 shown up for these hearings. So I thank you
7 very much. Lea Anne, thank you so much.

8 And I thank Patsy and 42 for Better
9 schools for all of the support and work that
10 they have done to support our schools and our
11 children. And they have put our children
12 first. Thank you.

13 I have the unique opportunity to travel
14 across this state and visit schools. As a
15 matter of fact, for the past three weeks I
16 have been doing just that. I have traveled
17 north, south, east, west, everywhere. I have
18 been to almost 50 schools in this state.

19 Let me give you some reality. I have
20 seen those 19-year-old buses that we are
21 talking about. As a matter of fact, just
22 recently I saw a bus on the side of the road
23 broken down full of students in 97 degree
24 weather.

25 I have seen the leaky roofs. I was in a

1 school building and was about to meet with the
2 principal. He comes running in. He's wet
3 from knee down. And he says, "I can't meet
4 with you today. I have three classrooms that
5 are leaking, and an awning just fell, and I've
6 got to make sure my students get safely to
7 their buses."

8 We mentioned kindergarten classrooms. I
9 visited a classroom with not 24 students, but
10 33 students in a kindergarten classroom with
11 no full-time assistant.

12 I visited a school where there were 37
13 in a fifth-grade class. And I asked the
14 principal, "what are you going to do?"

15 And he said, "Ms. Helmick, I have no
16 idea. We're stretched to the limit."

17 In some of our schools we have so many
18 TFA students -- those are Teach for America
19 students; those are people who come from out
20 of the state to come to our state and teach
21 for two years to get their loans paid off.
22 Are they invested in those children like we
23 are? Some stay, but very, very few. They
24 come to get their loans paid.

25 I also visited an elementary school just

1 recently -- matter of fact, week before last.
2 The principal told me when he came there as a
3 new principal just this summer, he had 11
4 vacancies. And he could not use TFA teachers,
5 so he filled 11 vacancies with Filipino
6 teachers. We have a serious teacher shortage.

7 I visited a college campus that usually
8 has 300 teacher interns. They had 65 this
9 semester. I visited another campus that
10 usually has 30 to 50 teacher interns. They
11 have seven. We have a serious teacher
12 shortage.

13 I visited two schools. One, the
14 playground equipment, I'm going to tell you I
15 was sad, because it was the same playground
16 equipment I had. You know that old iron
17 stuff? And it was so hot in the summer, you
18 couldn't play on it because it was too hot to
19 touch. And you couldn't go down the slide.
20 Oh, my goodness. And then in the winter, it
21 was just too cold. Same equipment. I
22 probably -- my friends my age played on it.

23 I visited another school, an elementary
24 school that had three different playgrounds
25 with all the most modern playground equipment

1 you can have. \$50,000 for playground
2 equipment for handicap students. Now, I'm
3 proud of that. I'm happy. I'm happy. But
4 what about those kids that don't have any
5 playground equipment? They can't even play
6 ball in the open space because they don't have
7 a fence around it and the teachers are afraid
8 for the students to play ball; that the ball
9 would go in the street and the kids will get
10 run over. So they don't even play ball in the
11 open place.

12 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Ms. Helmick --

13 *MS. HELMICK:* Okay. I'm done.

14 And as for that decoy, all of us know
15 that when you bring decoys home, it does not
16 put meat on the table.

17 Thank you.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Carolyn Townes.

19 Ms. Townes.

20 *MS. TOWNES:* Good afternoon. My name
21 is Carolyn Townes, and I am co-president of
22 the League of Women Voters of Mississippi.

23 The League is a nonpartisan organization
24 of women and men, and one of our missions is
25 to further an equitable quality public

1 education for all children.

2 The League promotes self-sufficiency for
3 individuals and families. We support programs
4 that promote the well-being, development, and
5 safety of all children. We promote adequate
6 funding for education.

7 Our state is ranked 50th in almost every
8 positive characteristic and 1st in almost all
9 of the negative ones. We want to reverse
10 those statistics, and we can only do that when
11 our children are educated.

12 Our children deserve trained teachers
13 and safe school buses. They need textbooks
14 and computers. Their teachers should not have
15 to pay for their supplies out of their own
16 funds. Their principals should not have to
17 worry about rain and the leaky ceilings. Our
18 children deserve better.

19 Almost 20 years ago the legislature
20 determined that it should provide sufficient
21 funding for an adequate education for
22 kindergarten through 12th grade, and it
23 determined how much that should be. Yet the
24 legislature has only obeyed its own law twice.
25 It's time to rectify this miscarriage of

1 justice. The children deserve better.

2 Yesterday the first responders of your
3 communities worked for three hours and rescued
4 a four-year-old boy and his dog that fell into
5 a 23-foot hole. Afterwards, one of the
6 firefighters commented that as he worked, all
7 he could think about was his own children.
8 And that's what we have to do now. We have to
9 think about our own children, all of our
10 children, all of Mississippi's children.

11 The League of Women Voters of
12 Mississippi supports Initiative 42.

13 Thank you.

14 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you.

15 Ms. Payne, Dierdre Payne. You are the
16 last speaker.

17 *DR. PAYNE:* Yay, me.

18 *MR. HOSEMANN:* And certainly one of
19 the most important.

20 *DR. PAYNE:* Thank you.

21 My name is Dierdre Payne. I live in
22 Ridgeland, Madison County, and was educated in
23 the Diocese of Natchez-Jackson Schools. Some
24 of you will recognize that as being a Catholic
25 school system. I am Catholic.

1 It was a blessing that Catholic schools
2 were available to us because the public
3 schools were severely underfunded. I
4 graduated high school with an academic
5 scholarship and left Mississippi to attend a
6 school in Minnesota. I was gone almost 40
7 years and returned to find some very
8 depressing statistics that I believe are all
9 centered in the dynamics that endorses the
10 lack of quality public education.

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 We can no longer afford to have
18 roadblocks, detours, decoys, and distortions
19 keep us from our unquestionable best.

20 The government's purpose is to provide
21 for the common good and to motivate citizens
22 to be their best in order to make positive
23 contributions to the state.

24 Our state's continued failure to provide
25 quality public education to all citizens is

1 evident in low academic achievement scores, a
2 gross lack of competitive employment skills in
3 the technological and scientific economy, and
4 a debilitating lack of industry and businesses
5 that help more Mississippians out of poverty.

6 It is time for the legislature to
7 support the people of Mississippi with public
8 school funding that reaches all students at
9 all levels. Initiative 42 will hold our
10 elected officials in the legislature
11 accountable for that funding.

12 It is state law that any lawsuit filed
13 against the state must be filed in Hinds
14 County, the site of the State Capitol, and
15 meeting place of the State Legislature. That
16 is a legislative decision which can be changed
17 at any time by the legislature.

18 Anyone who tells you that a Hinds County
19 judge has the final say over how your tax
20 dollars are spent is not telling the truth.
21 The law is if the legislators don't agree
22 with that judge's decision, they can appeal it
23 to the State Supreme Court. That body is made
24 up of judges from all over the state.

25 This is not about a judge. This is

1 about politics. Let us make it about
2 educating for the future of this state. I
3 support Initiative 42 because it ensures
4 accountability for funding public education in
5 Mississippi, even if only at the lowest level
6 and at the lowest level of expectation.

7 I urge you to support and vote for 42.
8 Accept nothing less. Accept no substitutes.

9 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Thank you. You
10 wouldn't be talking about the public schools
11 run by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, by
12 any chance.

13 *DR. PAYNE:* No. It's the Society of
14 the Divine Word. Sisters of the Holy
15 Spirit.

16 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Sisters of the Holy
17 Spirit.

18 *DR. PAYNE:* Vicksburg.

19 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Yeah. Ours was the
20 Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and they
21 pretty much beat us every day.

22 *DR. PAYNE:* No, they didn't. No, they
23 didn't.

24 *MR. HOSEMANN:* Brother Victor was one
25 of my teachers. Brother Victor was a great

1 individual with Brothers of the Sacred
2 Heart. And when you did something wrong in
3 school, he would write your name on the
4 board in chalk. It would be, like, posted.
5 And he would put one notch, and what that
6 meant was one paddle. And then he wouldn't
7 give them out until 2:30. So if you acted
8 up again, he would go with two notches.
9 That means you got two licks. And it
10 depended a good bit on how Brother Victor
11 felt at the time. So I appreciate the
12 Catholic education.

13 I want to thank everybody for coming
14 tonight. I won't delay you any longer.
15 Everybody needs to go home and read to their
16 children.

17 This has been quite an exercise for all
18 of us and all of our group. All of our team
19 has worked so hard to bring this to you.

20 I want to remind you, as I have in some
21 of the others, we will not dip our finger in
22 purple ink when we cast our ballot. When you
23 look at tonight's news and you look at what's
24 going on in other countries, then you will
25 recognize that we have the right in our

1 country to have a public discussion about some
2 critical issues as the right to vote, the
3 personhood amendment, the right of the
4 government to take your property, how long the
5 legislators are in office, and now education.
6 All of those in the last three years we have
7 addressed as a body politic in Mississippi.
8 It's a pretty amazing thing to see, and we
9 should all appreciate that.

10 I do want to echo as the last statement
11 here that none of this matters if you don't
12 vote. It has been a great exercise in our
13 democracy and great to have everybody speak
14 and voice their opinions, but it matters not
15 if you don't show up in November. So I would
16 encourage you to go to our website and read
17 our material. Ms. Allen is going to type what
18 you've said and other citizens have said
19 around the state of Mississippi. Go vote.

20 Thank y'all all for coming. Have a good
21 evening. We so appreciate everybody being
22 here.

23 (PROCEEDINGS CONCLUDED AT 7:15 P.M.)

24 * * * * *

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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 84 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