

To President Mark E. Keenum:

With the passing of HB 1523 and Governor Phil Bryant's decisions to declare the month of April as Confederate Heritage Month, we see that our state leaders are not committed to addressing issues of discrimination and the terrible history that the Confederacy represents for African Americans in the state of Mississippi. Specifically, we believe that confederate history—and the defense of slavery—represents the worst of Mississippi history, and that there is more to Mississippi than the ugly and painful four-year legacy of the Confederate States of America.

Mississippi's state flag does not represent the over 37% of African Americans in the state and the 21% of African American students at Mississippi State. Its presence on our campus symbolizes the general disregard of student voices both in the State of MS and especially at MSU, and until our state leaders decide to change this flag, we do not want it flying on our campus.

The University of Mississippi and the University of Southern Mississippi have heard their students' outcry against this hateful flag and we demand that the voices of Mississippi State University students be heard as well. We want the flag to be taken down. Not only does it not represent all students on this campus, but it also serves as a daily reminder of the violent, oppressive and painful history of American slavery. We demand that the state flag be taken down from Mississippi State University. Even one on our campus is one too many.

The flag's presence sets the tone for inclusivity on this campus and with over 20% of this campus being comprised of African American students, *the tone of this university is unwelcoming, exclusive, homogenous (i.e. white), oppressive and hateful*. In order to truly encourage an open, accepting, diverse and



PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, April is the month in which the Confederate States began and ended a four-year struggle; and

WHEREAS, on Confederate Memorial Day, we recognize those who served in the Confederacy; and

WHEREAS, April 25, 2016, is set aside as Confederate Memorial Day to honor those who served in the Confederacy; and

WHEREAS, it is important for all Americans to reflect upon our nation's past, to gain insight from our mistakes and successes, and to come to a full understanding that the lessons learned yesterday and today will carry us through tomorrow if we carefully and earnestly strive to understand and appreciate our heritage and our opportunities which lie before us;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Phil Bryant, Governor of the State of Mississippi, hereby proclaim the month of April 2016 as

CONFEDERATE HERITAGE MONTH

in the State of Mississippi.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Jackson, on the tenth day of February in the year of our Lord, two thousand and sixteen, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-first.

Phil Bryant
PHIL BRYANT

inclusive environment on this campus, the flag must be taken down immediately.

However, the flag coming down is just one step toward truly providing a welcoming and equitable environment for African Americans on campus. Below is a list of demands we black students want to see happen, with expediency, on our campus. MSU is far from the diverse and inclusive school

we hope for it to be, and if we want it to truly be inclusive, we must stop the meetings, talks, forums and discussions that are used to impede, rather than promote change, and begin taking action towards inclusivity. These ten demands are ten tangible measures that can be made toward improving the experiences of African



American students on campus. This list is not only for providing a better racial climate for African American students, but we also hope that these demands begin opening the door for improving the racial climate at MSU for all students.

Regards,
Concerned Black Students