



HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**EXCERPTS FROM GOV. BARBOUR'S REMARKS ON
ANNIVERSARY OF FREEDOM RIDERS**

On the holiday celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's birth and life of service, it is altogether fitting and proper we formally announce another historic celebration.

This Spring will be fifty years since the first in a series of what would come to be known as Freedom Rides took place. Starting in May, hundreds of people, mostly young, rode buses into Mississippi coming from all over the country, including the South and Mississippi itself. Tougaloo served as their base of operations.

Today we are announcing that Mississippi will officially commemorate this momentous time in our state's and nation's history with A Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Freedom Rides and Freedom Summer of 1961. A celebration dedicated to reconciliation and remembrance.

It is well known that Mississippi did not welcome the Freedom Riders fifty years ago, but today, as its governor, I am proud to host the several days of celebration that will begin on May 22, 2011.

We hope our celebration of the 1961 Freedom Riders will spur a national remembrance of one of the key campaigns of the Civil Rights Movement. While it may not have seemed so at the time to the Riders themselves, who were mistreated, beaten and jailed, including many at the State Penitentiary at Parchman, their effort was part of an irresistible tide that inevitably led to the end of de jure segregation.

A lot of reprehensible things took place between the advent of the Freedom Rides in 1961 and enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and finally integration in the bulk of this state's public schools. Deplorable actions including the murder of innocent people, young men in service to a cause that was right, will always be a stain on our history.

And school integration did not put an end to racial problems or prejudice. However, the 100-plus Freedom Riders participating in the 2011 celebration will find Mississippi an enormously changed state as to race relations.

Some of us working on this event may have different views of which government policies and programs – or absence thereof – best serve Freedom.



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But no believer in Freedom can defend segregation as acceptable to those who believe our Creator endowed us with certain unalienable rights that include life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Hence everyone in Mississippi should welcome this celebration.

So, as we announce this celebration to be held in May, we do so proud of the progress made since those courageous young people came to Mississippi fifty years ago. But, we are also aware of how far we have to go ... on many fronts ... and that our pursuit of Freedom for all our brethren is both intended by God and in need of pursuit not just in our state but across our great country

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