

Eric Clark

Secretary of State

Post Office Box 12113
Jackson, Mississippi 39236-2113

February 5, 2007

Dear fellow Mississippians:

Today I am announcing that I will not run for re-election this year.

First, let me say a great big "thank you" to the people of Mississippi for allowing me to work for you in public office since 1980. So many people have worked so hard to help me! And, I thank the Good Lord for blessing me and allowing me to serve you.

When I was first elected to the Legislature, I had just turned 28 years old. That was 28 years ago. I will be 56 this summer. I have spent half my life running for and serving in elective office. During that time, I have met so many wonderful people who have blessed my life so richly. I have cherished their warmth, hospitality and graciousness. Mississippi is a special place because Mississippians are special people. But I think it is time for me to redirect and do something different.

It has been a great privilege to work with a wonderful staff in this office -- the best, most capable and patriotic co-workers anyone could have -- who have helped me make the Secretary of State's Office "the most user friendly agency in state government," making life easier for hundreds of Mississippians every day.

In running three times for this office, my motto has been "the courage to do what's right." That has been our theme: taking on big, hard projects to move our state forward. There are two of which I am especially proud.

First, I have spent countless hours working on Gulf Coast tidelands issues. When I took office, there were hundreds of potential lawsuits involving coastal property issues. Additionally, I have worked hard to strike a balance between economic development (particularly casino-related development) and preservation of our invaluable natural resources. Since 1996, we amicably resolved nearly all private ownership issues without lawsuits, facilitated billions of dollars in economic development, and helped create thousands of jobs. Just as important, we swapped the state's disputed claim to 27 acres of land in commercial areas on the Coast for more than 16,000 acres of endangered natural areas for permanent preservation, the most notable being Deer Island. As we rebuild the Coast, Mississippians living now and generations yet unborn will enjoy recreation on these public lands.

The second great challenge of my term as Secretary of State has been overseeing the implementation of the federal "Help America Vote Act" of 2002. Working closely with our county election officials, we have completely overhauled the state's voter rolls, thereby reducing the potential for fraud, equipped our counties with new,

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more accurate voting machines, and made it easier for our disabled citizens and Mississippians serving in the military to vote. While the federal government has sued numerous states for foot-dragging, Mississippi has been held up as a national model for implementing "HAVA." We have made remarkable progress in a short time.

In addition to these two projects, my office has aggressively attended to the public business on a wide variety of issues. For example, we have:

- Built an advanced computer system to help people do business in Mississippi quickly and easily.
- Required greater disclosure of who is financing our political campaigns.
- Safeguarded our citizens' financial investments and charitable contributions, and recovered approximately \$45 million in fines and penalties for violating our securities, charities, and pre-need funeral laws.
- Contributed more than \$111 million directly to our state treasury for services our office performs, with no increase in the fees we charge.
- Helped our school districts generate more than half a billion dollars for local schools by strong administration of our 16th Section lands.

I am very proud of all these accomplishments, and I thank everyone who has helped me to do them.

Finally, I most especially thank my wife Karan and our children Charles and Catherine. When I was elected Secretary of State the first time, Charles was eight and Catherine was two. This summer they will be twenty and fourteen. I thank Karan and our kids for all the sacrifices they have made to allow me to do this job.

Karan and I are spending a lot of time praying that God will reveal His will for this point in our lives. I don't know what I will do next, but I am relying on the promise in Jeremiah 29:11:

"I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future."

Whatever opportunities may come my way, I hope to continue to serve the people of this state that I love so much. Thank you and God bless you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Clark". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Eric Clark