



STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

HALEY BARBOUR
GOVERNOR

November 19, 2010

Dear Friends:

I have been asked to write this letter to make you aware of a very valuable resource that exists within every state: the State Service Commission. Each state has an entity responsible for coordinating volunteerism and national service activities, such as AmeriCorps. You may recall that the Serve America Act recently re-authorized this work, with a strong focus on giving more authority to governors (through their Commissions) to meet critical community needs. The Act passed with overwhelming bi-partisan support, as leaders from across the political spectrum recognized the merit of promoting service and volunteerism, as well as developing innovative volunteer opportunities to meet the needs of our communities and our states.

Here in Mississippi, we have had unprecedented opportunity to make use of our state service agency, the Mississippi Commission on Volunteer Services, in recent years. After Hurricane Katrina, MCVS organized an emergency call center and a donations warehouse. On April 24 of this year, an F-4 tornado tore through our state causing extensive damage to a large portion of eight counties. Our Commission was on the scene that very same day and, on the following day, opened a large "Volunteer City" operation that distributed over 300,000 pounds of goods to affected citizens. They organized volunteers, coordinated work orders with emergency managers, and completed over 500 work orders, utilizing over 1,500 volunteers who put in a total of over 25,000 hours. Additionally, MCVS played a large role in coordinating volunteer response to the Deepwater Horizon oil incident.

My wife and Mississippi's First Lady, Marsha Barbour, serves as the Honorary Chair for our Commission. Marsha and I encourage you to take a moment to get to know your Commission and utilize them as a tool in your state arsenal to meet critical community needs. Time and again, Mississippi's service commission has proven to be a great asset in responding swiftly and effectively to meet the needs of communities in our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Haley Barbour".

Haley Barbour