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### **The Parents' Campaign Celebrates Fourth Anniversary with Membership Milestone**

JACKSON, Miss. – The Parents' Campaign has crossed the 60,000-member threshold on the fourth anniversary of its incorporation. The nonpartisan group was incorporated on March 31, 2006, with the goal of ensuring excellent public schools for all Mississippi children.

The Parents' Campaign communicates with its members about legislation and policy that affects public education, explaining the potential impact of pending education bills, encouraging its members to contact their legislators, and reporting legislators' votes. The organization's website is widely regarded as one of the best sources of credible and up-to-date information about legislation and policy that affects public schools.

As word of the effort has spread, membership in The Parents' Campaign has exploded. On Wednesday, March 31, 2010, exactly four years after its incorporation, membership in The Parents' Campaign surpassed the 60,000 mark, growing its rolls to 60,067.

Claiborne Barksdale, chairman of The Parents' Campaign's Board of Directors, commented on the implications of the group's dramatic growth. "While this is a significant milestone, this is much more than just a number. It is evidence of the deep concern that Mississippians have about the quality of education that the state's children are receiving. And it represents a broad cross-section across every party, every demographic, every area of the state. People understand that the politicians in Jackson are more responsive when they know that the folks back home have access to accurate, untarnished information."

Members of The Parents' Campaign contacted their legislators recently about cuts that were made to this year's school budgets and were successful in getting over \$37-million of that funding restored. Their current focus is on the education funding bill for the next school year, legislation that is scheduled to be taken up when legislators return to Jackson in mid-April.

But funding is not the group's only focus. School improvement is also a primary concern. Last year, The Parents' Campaign was instrumental in gaining passage of **The Children First Act of 2009**, legislation directed at improving underperforming schools. In addition, the group has pushed a number of measures designed to bring student achievement in Mississippi in line with the rest of the nation.

Executive director Nancy Loome stated, "Nothing is more important to the future of our state than a high quality public education system. Our members understand that the only way for our state to attract good jobs, and to ultimately lower taxes and improve quality of life, is to invest in good public schools. The 60,000+ folks who have joined our effort are insisting that their legislators make education a priority so that all our children can be assured better schools and brighter futures." She expects that membership in the group will continue to increase.

The Parents' Campaign has volunteers across the state who are instrumental in growing the organization. Deborah Meador, director of member services for The Parents' Campaign, coordinates their efforts. "I really enjoy traveling around the state meeting our members and enlisting new members at parent meetings and school and community events. We have a great group of volunteers who are working very hard on behalf of the schoolchildren in their local communities. I salute them and their dedication to improving education in our state."

The Parents' Campaign is located at 222 North President Street, Suite 102, in Jackson. For more information, contact Loome at 601-961-4551. [www.MSParentsCampaign.org](http://www.MSParentsCampaign.org).

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