

***Band Members**

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events.”

When asked why the Director of Bands at Talladega College offered so many scholarships, the director said, “The HCCHS students are exceptional. They display excellent musicianship and a very rare level of discipline. I believe recruiters from our other programs may come to visit students at the high school because of this positive impression made by the student musicians.”

On Saturday, December 14, 2019, the HCCHS Marching Band traveled to Indianola,

Mississippi to perform a halftime show on a basketball court in the Krankin For Christmas Battle of the Bands at Gentry High School. The judges were band directors from Mississippi Valley State University, Alcorn State University and Mississippi Delta Community College.

As a result of their performance, the band received several awards: Overall Grand Champion, 1st Place Drumline, 1st Place Drum Major, 2nd Place Floorshow Competition, 2nd Place Dance Line; and 3rd Place Stand Battle.

Superintendent of Schools, Dr. James L. Henderson, said, “We are very proud of our students and pleased by the leadership of their instructors. These scholarships are fantastic awards to signal to our students their value as participants in the next learning organization of their lives. This may be their first scholarship, but it surely won’t be their last.”

The band will head to Port Arthur, Texas January 17-19, 2020 to participate in the Underground Showdown Battle of the Bands against some of the best high school bands in the country.

***Opinion**

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tion, a health care policy think tank, found that in 2017, when 32 states plus D.C. had expanded and implemented the Medicaid expansion, 12.7 million newly eligible people signed up for Medicaid nationally. In fact, many key bills are led by Rep. Clark.

House Bill 952, by Kabir Karriem, D-Columbus, would have raised Mississippi’s minimum wage from \$7.25 an hour to \$10.10. Many cities and states are moving towards a \$15 wage. Even H.B. 277, which would raise Mississippi’s minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$8.25 an hour and set requirements for exemptions and overtime, authored by Bryant Clark, D-Pickens, did not progress.

House Bill 124 would create the Mississippi Affordable Housing Opportunity Fund and establish the Mississippi Home Corporation to carry it out. By: John Hines, D-Greenville

House Bill 216 would use existing and uncommitted money -- quite a rational approach -- to create a state-funded child care system. These funds would be remaining from the previous

fiscal year, up to \$40 million, and would be available for use as vouchers. By: Orlando Paden, D-Clarksdale.

House Bill 79 would foster a Mississippi Department of Labor. The state currently has an “employment services” department, but it does not function like other states’ legitimate labor departments do. By: Tom Miles, D-Forest.

House Bill 162 would create a Skills Standards Advisory Board, to encourage and help workers obtain more skills. By: Bryant Clark, D-Pickens

House Bill 207 would generate the Housing Loan Assistance Pilot Program; and authorize bonds to provide for it. By: Bryant Clark, D-Pickens.

Finally, House Bill 426 would provide funds for the purpose of renovating a portion of the Metrocenter Mall in Jackson to house the Hinds Community College Workforce Development Training Center. By: Credell Calhoun, D-Jackson.

For context, the median household income in Mississippi is just \$43,529. In comparison, the U.S. median household income is \$60,336.

Twelve percent of MS

residents are not enrolled in health insurance, some 3% less than the 8.7% of the national population not enrolled. That means Mississippi has 27.5% more non-enrollees than the national average.

Mississippi exhibits a 52.2% employment rate, while the U.S. has a 59.5% employment rate, likely showing workers who are discouraged in their attempts at finding a job.

Mississippi could be a model of the best kind instead of being routinely cited for income failure. Instead of the chronic listing of Old Miss as the nation’s poorest state, it could be showing the nation the way up.

**Robert Weiner was a Clinton and Bush White House spokesman, Chief of Staff of the House Aging Committee and Health Subcommittee, spokesman for the House Government Operations Committee, and senior staff for Congressmen John Conyers, Charles Rangel, Claude Pepper, Ed Koch, Sen. Edward Kennedy, and 4-Star Gen. Barry McCaffrey. Zachary Filtz is Senior Policy Analyst for Robert Weiner Associates and Solutions for Change.*



Pictured above (from left): Kelvin Jordan Jr., Jordan Johnson, Jorden Robinson, Chrisdarius Brown, Randy Howard, Ja’Kayla Quinn, Samario Williams and Patrick Chatelain. (Photo Submitted)

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