

First of these letters was sent in August 2019. These were hand-delivered by someone of the Board of I#2.

SAFE DORMITORIES, INC.

POST OFFICE BOX 927

LEXINGTON, MS 39095

January 23, 2020

Dr. Alfred Rankins, Jr.
Commissioner of Higher Education
3825 Ridgewood Road
Jackson, MS 39211

Re: Dangerous Dormitories

Dear Dr. Rankins:

Beginning over a hundred years ago, my family has had five generations of Ole Miss students. My father played football and basketball there; my husband was a Carrier Scholar, editor of the annual, and in the Hall of Fame. Two of my children and my husband graduated from the Ole Miss Law School; one of our granddaughters entered as a freshman last fall. Our loyalty is lifelong and deep.

I state my bona fides so that you will understand the sincerity of my heartfelt concern about a very disturbing policy in place now at Ole Miss and every other public college and university throughout our beloved Mississippi. This extremely dangerous policy which is presently in force is that of allowing opposite-gender visitation in dormitory rooms for long hours each day---and far into the night. As a result of this policy, mothers with daughters at Ole Miss or other state schools with similar policies have told me horrifying stories---and I am just *one* grandmother.

The lack of rules and standards in our state universities and colleges is very dangerous. Anyone who thinks that young people, fresh out of high school, do not need the strong under-girding of behavioral boundaries is delusional. The Me-too movement has exposed the glaring dangers inherent in our universities' "open bedroom" policy. (See Exhibit A)

Young women need protection from the superior strength of many young men. Young men need these same restraints. A young man's reputation can be ruined for a lifetime even if he is not guilty of wrongdoing. Our lack of rules and standards on college campuses in Mississippi borders on criminal neglect of our young people. If we do nothing, then we are complicit in the consequences which result. It's frightening!

Our rules state that freshmen *must* live in dormitories, and yet, we put them there *unprotected*.

There is also a serious financial risk for our institutions with the present dormitory policy: our universities are sitting ducks when the first female student files a law suit after she has been raped. My husband, who knows something about these matters, says that the rape victim will likely say, with considerable justification, that the University is more than negligent, it is an accessory. See the enclosed photograph (Exhibit B) taken last year in the freshman dormitory at Mississippi State.

The solution to this problem is very simple: ***immediately stop opposite-gender visitation in dormitory rooms at Ole Miss and on all state campuses.*** The expense of this solution is no more than taping a piece of paper on every dormitory door, which reads, "No opposite-gender in-room visitation."

Members of our organization, the non-profit Safe Dormitories, Inc., are deeply troubled about the dangerous situation which now exists in all the universities in our state which are under the auspices of the IHL---deeply troubled.

This letter is self-explanatory, but we think that a place on the agenda of one of the upcoming IHL Board meetings will help greatly in relating the extreme seriousness of the problem of opposite-gender visitation in our state dormitories. Very few items, if any, on your agenda are as crucial to the welfare of our students as this issue.

There will be one or two of us to attend, and we will not take more than fifteen minutes of your valuable time. We would like to come as soon as it can be arranged with your schedule and ours.

We do not want, however, to purchase full-page ads in the *Clarion Ledger* without first giving the IHL Board the courtesy of knowing what our purpose is and hoping the Board will join us in remedying this dangerous situation.

Safe dormitories on the Mississippi campuses will be a great attraction to our state schools for concerned parents everywhere because this problem is not exclusive to Mississippi but is pervasive around the country.

Mississippi *must* take this courageous step for a return to safety on all university and colleges campuses. NOW IS THE TIME!

Sincerely,

Mrs. Don Barrett

President

Safe Dormitories, Inc.

EXHIBIT A

OPPOSITE-GENDER VISITATION HOURS AT MISSISSIPPI INSTITUTIONS UNDER THE AUSPICES OF IHL

University of Mississippi: ----no dorm mothers, no curfews

9:00 a.m.-midnight, Sunday-Thursday

9:00 a.m.-2:00 a.m., Friday, Saturday

Mississippi State University: ---no dorm mothers, no curfews

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 a.m.

University of Southern Mississippi: dorm mothers; no curfews

10:00 a.m. to midnight, Sunday -Thursday

10:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m., Friday and Saturday

Mississippi University for Women---no dorm mothers, no curfews

1:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m., Sunday through Saturday

Mississippi Valley State University---no curfews,

3:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., Sunday through Thursday

3:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Friday and Saturday

Alcorn State University: no answer

Sunday-Thursday 2:00 p.m.-11:00 p.m.

Friday-Saturday 2:00 p.m.-1:00 a.m.

Delta State University: ---no dorm mothers, no curfews

12:00 p.m.- 1:00 a.m.

Jackson State University: --no dorm mothers, no curfews

4:00 p.m.-12:00 a.m., Friday through Saturday

4:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m., Sunday