

# STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

## Office of the Governor



### EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 1579

**WHEREAS**, WE THE PEOPLE of the State of Mississippi shall never forget the sacrifices of the members of the American armed forces and shall always stand ready to recognize and honor those who gave the last full measure of devotion for the cause of freedom; and

**WHEREAS**, Mississippi mourns the passing of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Derek Joshua Abbott and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Bryan Andrew Zemek who lost their lives in the line of duty on February 23, 2024, in an AH-64 Apache helicopter crash in Prentiss County, Mississippi; and

**WHEREAS**, Officer Abbott was born on February 14, 1982, the son of Danny Abbott and Mary Savage, and began his distinguished military career on December 27, 2002, when he enlisted as a private in Company D, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 159<sup>th</sup> Aviation Regiment, Mississippi National Guard; and

**WHEREAS**, in August 2006, Officer Abbott was deployed to Iraq and was recognized for exceptionally valorous achievement during air operations supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, earning the Air Medal with Valor; and

**WHEREAS**, Officer Abbott married the love of his life Brandi eighteen years ago and the couple have three children Chandler, Breanna and Grayson; and

**WHEREAS**, Officer Abbott was a devout Christian known to his friends and family for his steadfast devotion and love of Christ, his immense love and devotion to his family, and his commitment to service in his church, in the military, in his community, and for his country, and he will always be remembered as a Forever Hero; and


**WHEREAS**, the words of Governor Tate Reeves reflect the thoughts and prayers of the State of Mississippi: *"I want to extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends of our fallen soldiers. We will always remember their honorable service, and we grieve with the families during this tragic time."*; and

**WHEREAS**, in the words of the Adjutant General of the Mississippi Army National Guard, the loss of Officers Abbott and Zemek *"is a devastating day for the Mississippi National Guard, and this accident serves as a constant reminder of the selfless service, sacrifice and commitment that our brave service men and women face while performing in the line of duty."*


**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Tate Reeves, by the authority vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and laws of the State of Mississippi, and 4 USC § 7(m) do hereby proclaim a day of official mourning in the State of Mississippi in memory of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Derek Joshua Abbott and direct that all flags of the United States of America and the State of Mississippi be flown at half-staff on all buildings and grounds of the State of Mississippi and all areas under its jurisdiction beginning at sunrise and ending at sunset on Sunday, March 17, 2024, in memory of Officer Abbott. Mississippi will forever remember Officer Abbott's devotion and sacrifices for our great Nation.

**IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Mississippi to be affixed.

**DONE** at the Capitol in the City of Jackson, the 14<sup>th</sup> day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America, the two hundred and forty-eighth.

  
TATE REEVES  
GOVERNOR

BY THE GOVERNOR:

  
MICHAEL WATSON  
SECRETARY OF STATE