Challenge of a Generation:
How can Mississippi retain and attract young people?

Jake McGraw
Public Policy Coordinator
William Winter Institute
jake@winterinstitute.org
Q: What do B.B. King, Richard Wright, Elvis Presley, Oprah Winfrey, Tennessee Williams, and Muddy Waters have in common?

A: They were all born in Mississippi.  
But they all became famous somewhere else.
How many people are leaving?

2015-2016: – 7,467
2010-2016: – 35,013
Lifetime: – 401,000

In the last six years, Mississippi has exported as many people as live in the city of Tupelo, the 7th largest in the state.

In a lifetime, Mississippi has exported as many people as live in Jackson, Gulfport, Meridian, Southaven, Hattiesburg, and Biloxi combined.
How many people are leaving?

2010-2016: - 35,013

- 49,309 U.S.-born residents

+14,296 foreign-born residents
### How do we compare?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>+ 21,775</td>
<td>19,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>+ 21,958</td>
<td>44,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>+ 27,555</td>
<td>29,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>+ 191,384</td>
<td>55,613</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Every other Southeastern state gained more residents than it lost in each of the years between 2010 and 2016*

*Mississippi had a net loss every single year*
Where do they leave? Where do they go?

Texas: -75,217
Georgia: -51,472
Florida: -41,675
Alabama: -26,524
Arkansas: -14,038
North Carolina: -12,061
South Carolina: -9,088
Louisiana: 1,418*
Tennessee: 18,351*
Who is leaving?

• 88% of net loss is accounted for by people under 35.

• All net loss is accounted for by loss of college graduates. More degrees = more likely to leave.

• White college grads are more likely to leave than black college grads, and men are more likely to leave than women.

• Five years after graduation, only half of degree recipients from MS’s public universities are employed in the state.
Since 2010, Mississippi has experienced the nation’s largest loss of millennials (born 1981-1999).
Table 2A. MS Employment Outcomes and Median Annual Earnings (MAE) by Residency: All Mississippi Public University Graduates\(^{ab}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cohort</th>
<th>Total # of graduates</th>
<th>Total # not re-enrolling(^c)</th>
<th>1 year after graduation</th>
<th>MAE (S)</th>
<th>3 years after graduation</th>
<th>MAE (S)</th>
<th>5 years after graduation</th>
<th>MAE (S)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>In-state</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>12,018</td>
<td>9,424</td>
<td>6,819</td>
<td>72.36</td>
<td>31,243</td>
<td>6,151</td>
<td>65.27</td>
<td>34,458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>12,221</td>
<td>9,233</td>
<td>6,811</td>
<td>73.77</td>
<td>29,727</td>
<td>6,076</td>
<td>65.81</td>
<td>33,946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>12,392</td>
<td>9,672</td>
<td>7,102</td>
<td>73.43</td>
<td>29,470</td>
<td>6,417</td>
<td>66.35</td>
<td>34,858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>12,820</td>
<td>10,078</td>
<td>7,411</td>
<td>73.54</td>
<td>30,799</td>
<td>6,662</td>
<td>66.10</td>
<td>35,553</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>12,882</td>
<td>10,449</td>
<td>7,685</td>
<td>73.55</td>
<td>31,550</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>13,232</td>
<td>10,852</td>
<td>7,941</td>
<td>73.18</td>
<td>31,044</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Out-of-state</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2007</td>
<td>2,110</td>
<td>1,914</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>15.67</td>
<td>29,823</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>8.67</td>
<td>35,954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-2008</td>
<td>2,187</td>
<td>1,955</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>15.50</td>
<td>29,880</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>8.44</td>
<td>37,129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-2009</td>
<td>2,236</td>
<td>2,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>29,886</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>9.55</td>
<td>35,726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>2,510</td>
<td>2,175</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>16.46</td>
<td>29,618</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>37,785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>2,715</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>29,717</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>10.05</td>
<td>35,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011-2012</td>
<td>2,828</td>
<td>2,520</td>
<td>422</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>32,150</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012-2013</td>
<td>2,882</td>
<td>2,599</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>15.16</td>
<td>32,514</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Graduates whose residency status was not specified were not included in these results.
\(^b\) Employment is limited to those working in Mississippi.
\(^c\) Figures exclude graduates that re-enrolled in a Mississippi public university within a year of graduation.
Why do they leave? (Or why don’t they move in?)

• Economic Reasons
  • Bachelor’s Degrees pay $9,000 less than national average
  • Graduate Degrees pay $16,000 less than national average
  • STEM graduates, in particular, have few job opportunities in the state

• Educational Reasons
  • Pursuing higher ed options not available in MS
  • Securing quality public education for children

• Social Reasons
  • Living in urban area with amenities not available in MS
  • “The Big Sort” to places with like-minded cultural and political values
  • Perception
Both Cause & Effect of Economic Stagnation

Slowest economic growth in Southeast

Only Southeastern state with persistent outmigration

Other symptoms:
• Cultural isolation/Hostility to new people & ideas
• Political insularity
• Lost tax revenue/Subsidization of other states
“The Hospitality State”

- Foreign-born population: 72,000 (2.4%)
- Up from 0.8% in 1990
- 4.5% of business owners born overseas
- 3rd-lowest foreign-born % in U.S. (WV, MT)
- As many immigrants in Omaha, NE metro area as in all of Mississippi
“The Hospitality State”

- Only 94 refugees resettled in Mississippi in last 10 years (only DE, HI, WY had fewer)
- Alabama: 1,375
- Louisiana: 2,203
- Nebraska (pop. 1.8 million): 9,846
Challenge of a Generation: How can Mississippi retain and attract young people?

Jake McGraw

Public Policy Coordinator
William Winter Institute
jake@winterinstitute.org

www.rethinkms.org
@RethinkMS