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### **David Watkins Appeals Secretary of State's Order**

David Watkins filed in court today his answer to the March 24 decision by the Mississippi Secretary of State accusing Watkins of violating certain legal agreements contained in a bond deal used to finance renovations of part of the Metrocenter Mall property in Jackson.

The Watkins appeal was filed in Hinds County Chancery Court, and directly challenges the findings, legal reasoning, and legal authority of the Secretary of State to issue such findings under the facts involved. The response by Watkins includes the following points:

- The Secretary of State's decision charges Watkins with violations that were never even alleged against Watkins until after the hearing process, thus preventing Watkins from being able to defend himself.
- The Secretary of State's decision says it assumed that whether or not money was owed to Watkins under a contract "is irrelevant." But as Watkins says in his appeal, the entire case is about whether money provided to Watkins was legal and whether it should have been disclosed back when the bonds were sold.
- The Secretary of State's decision is also based on an assumption that his office does not have to prove fraud on the part of Watkins in order to charge him with violating a statute that is designed to prevent fraud.
- In one of the most egregious errors in the decision, the Secretary of State accused Watkins of failing to disclose in a bond sale in April of 2011 that he had purchased property in Meridian *two months later*, in June of 2011.

Attached is the pleading filed today on behalf of Watkins by Attorney Brad Pigott.