

MATTHEW L. BARTON  
DISTRICT ATTORNEY



365 LOSHER STREET, SUITE 210  
HERNANDO, MISSISSIPPI 38632

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI  
OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY  
21st JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Michele Henley  
Member of DeSoto County School Board  
Via Hand Delivery

Re: Demand for Resignation

Dear Ms. Henley,

Public office carries a sacred trust — the trust of parents, teachers, and above all, the children we are sworn to protect. When that trust is compromised, the integrity of the institutions we serve is placed at risk.

You authored and submitted a letter to the court on behalf of Lindsey Whiteside, a youth pastor convicted of sexual battery of a child while in a position of trust and authority. In doing so, you lent the prestige of your office to advance the interests of a known child predator. Even more troubling, the victim in this case was a student within the very school system you help govern.

Your letter was not written as a private citizen, but as an elected member of the DeSoto County School Board — entrusted with safeguarding our children from predators like Lindsey Whiteside. Intended or not, your actions signal tolerance where there must be none. Your support for Lindsey Whiteside sends the wrong message to victims, parents, and every child who looks to adults for protection — that courage may be dismissed and justice deferred.

Those who harm children — and those who use their positions to defend or excuse them — have no place in leadership. When an elected official chooses to protect the abuser rather than the abused, she ceases to serve the public good.

The people of DeSoto County deserve confidence in their school board's unwavering commitment to the safety and moral protection of students. Your continued service undermines that confidence.

For these reasons, and in the interest of restoring moral clarity and public trust, I respectfully but firmly demand your immediate resignation. This request is made not in anger, but in the belief that the integrity of our institutions depends on accountability and judgment equal to the responsibility of the office.

Sincerely,

Matthew Barton