

To the Members of the Legislature and the Citizens of Mississippi:

It is our pleasure to present Mississippi's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended June 30, 2002. The report provides you with detailed information regarding the fiscal activity of our state government.

Like every other state in the nation, Mississippi has been affected by a sluggish national economy. Revenue collections have not met the estimate, and as a result, difficult decisions have been made. However, we have dealt with the challenges before us in a fiscally responsible manner, without raising taxes on the working people of this state.

We continue to commit ourselves to the full funding of education. From sending our children to school ready to learn to adult learning programs, our investment in education is an investment in our future. That investment must be kept strong.

Quality education also means quality jobs. Our focus on creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people is still intense. Our efforts to recruit and retain industry in all areas of the state are paying off. Every day, the world looks at Mississippi and realizes we are competing as never before.

Ensuring the access to quality health care for every Mississippian will always be a priority. We are dedicated to making our health care programs the most efficient and effective in the nation, and health care professionals in the state have our support through medical malpractice reform.

Homeland security is on the forefront of people's minds as we struggle to bring an end to terrorism and the threats of terrorism. We have brought together agencies and officials from every level of government to construct emergency response plans, and we are ready.

There continue to be, and always will be, challenges for us. Our job is to turn those challenges into opportunities for the people of Mississippi. That's what we've been doing, and the work isn't slowing down.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE