

For Michael Marks –

You might want to review Governor Musgrove's Clarion Ledger article today, Sunday, May 20, 2001, in the Perspective section.

Other points –

Governor Musgrove vetoed House Bill 1611. House Bill 1611 provides for a \$17.1 million cut in general funds to the Department of Education's Minimum Program and only funds the Minimum Program by utilizing approximately \$30.5 million in Education Enhancement textbook and classroom supply funds as authorized by House Bill No. 776. In other words, the Legislature funded the minimum program by reducing the resources for textbooks and classroom supplies, both of which are critical to our teachers being able to teach effectively and our students being about to learn. This is not the way to build a sound foundation for education in our state.

While we are giving teachers a \$23 million raise with one hand, we are taking away \$14.1 million with the other hand by drastically reducing funding for classroom supplies. This does not send a vote of confidence to our teachers.

In essence, teachers are receiving a pay increase that will more than likely be used by them to buy supplies for their classrooms.

The Legislature is shuffling money from one area to another to make the teacher pay raise look good. It is a shell game.

Throughout this past year, Governor Musgrove asked the legislature to remove the 5% condition tacked to the teacher pay raise. They would not listen to him. Instead, they have given themselves an excuse not to pay the teachers next year, and the next year and the next if our state's sales growth rate does not improve.

With a state budget of \$3 billion, the money is there, but the legislature is bound and determined to play politics, choosing to give the money to prisons rather than education.

House Bill 1609 provides money for the purpose of defraying the expenses of general education programs, the vocational and technical education of the State Department of Education and the Mississippi School District Uniform Millage Assistance Grant Program for FY 2002. Governor Musgrove vetoed House Bill 1609 because it provides \$800,000 for the Walnut Grove Youth Correction Facility, a facility which is not even governed by the Department of Education. If funds are allocated from the Department of Education, then administration and supervision should follow.

Governor Musgrove will continue to fight for the teachers, but it takes everyone, working together to get legislators to listen and to do what is right.