

*Remarks for the
National Conference of Black Mayors
April 25, 2002*

Thank you, Mayor Johnson, and I know you are proud to be hosting this conference here in the capital city of Jackson, Mississippi.

On behalf of the 2.8 million citizens of this state, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Mississippi.

(tell story of traveling to DC; lawyer on plane who didn't believe you were governor)

Whether it's one lawyer on a plane or one thousand people who read an article in The New York Times about what we're doing here, people are learning that Mississippi is changing.

They're learning that we're doing business in a different way, especially in jobs, education, health care and public safety.

We're putting Internet-accessible computers in every public school classroom, and are on target to be the first state in the nation to do so.

We're raising teacher pay, to a point where the average salary will rise from 49th to 19th in the nation.

We're bringing quality, high-paying jobs to all Mississippians. In the past two years, we've created more than 21,000 jobs and attracted over \$6 billion in investments. That's good news for the people of this state.

We're working hard to restructure Medicaid, so it can work for the 650,000 Mississippians who depend on it for their health care needs.

And, we are more focused than ever on the public safety and security of our citizens – a focus found in the new level of cooperation between state and federal agencies.

Mississippi is working hard to build a future for all her citizens, and here's how it happens.

Believing "I must do something" solves more problems than saying "something must be done."

You won't hear us say, "something must be done." We live in America's state of promise. It is a promise too long unkept. That has changed.

During your time here in Jackson, you will see how believing that “something must be done” is changing things. From Mayor Johnson’s office in City Hall to the State Capitol, we’re doing something – and the results are good for everyone.

My best wishes to you for a successful conference. It’s great to have you in Jackson.