

Script for WLBT "The Bottom Line"

GOOD EVENING.

IN THE 2002 LEGISLATIVE SESSION, WE FOUND A LOT OF COMMON GROUND. IN THE AREAS OF JOBS, EDUCATION, AND PUBLIC SAFETY, THE LEGISLATURE PROVIDED FUNDING IN LINE WITH THE EXECUTIVE BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS I OFFERED IN JANUARY.

HOWEVER, WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH CARE, WE'RE STILL IN SEARCH OF THAT COMMON GROUND.

THE FAILURE OF THE LEGISLATURE TO FULLY FUND MEDICAID WILL HAVE A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON YOUR HEALTH CARE SERVICES. EVEN IF YOU CUT ALL OTHER OPTIONAL SERVICES, YOU WILL ONLY SAVE \$44 MILLION.

THE REMAINING CUTS MUST COME FROM THE PRESCRIPTION DRUG PROGRAM, AND THE 13,000 MISSISSIPPIANS WHO WILL BE FORCED OUT OF NURSING HOMES. ALMOST \$500 MILLION IS AT RISK, AND THAT'S A RISK WE CAN'T AFFORD TO TAKE.

THIS ISN'T A SCARE TACTIC. IT'S THE TRUTH, AND IT DIDN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN THIS WAY.

I WANT TO FIND SOME COMMON GROUND THAT WILL MEAN YOUR HEALTH CARE WON'T BE INTERRUPTED, AND I CALL ON LEGISLATORS TO WORK WITH ME TOWARD THAT GOAL.

OUR GOOD WORK CANNOT BE LESS THAN OUR BEST, AND I DON'T BELIEVE WE'VE GIVEN IT OUR BEST YET – THAT'S WHY I VETOED THE MEDICAID APPROPRIATIONS BILL. WE CAN STILL FIND A SOLUTION, AND I KNOW YOU ARE DEMANDING IT OF US.

I URGE THE LEGISLATURE TO SUSTAIN THIS VETO AND WORK WITH ME, TO MAKE MEDICAID WORK FOR YOU.

(end)