

Remarks for  
Making Positive Choices, McComb  
September 19, 2003

- Thank you Judge Smith. I know you have been instrumental in working with the students and faculty to reinforce the positive with our students.
  
- It's great to be here with you today
  - This is one of the best things about my job
  - Meeting with young people like you
  
- Recognize Superintendent Dr. Pat Cooper
  - McComb High School Principal Mr. George Jordan
  - Denman Junior High Principal Mrs. Ruby Husband
  - Mrs. Betty Wilson – Head of Business and Technology Complex
  - Tuesday Abraham – School Attendance Counselor and head of the Positive Incentive Program

- Businesses and individuals who have contributed to the Positive Incentive Program
- I'd like to congratulate every student here
- Denman Jr. High is rated as a Level 4, exemplary school
  - under MS Accountability System (made performance goal or exceeded growth expectation)
- McComb High School is rated as a Level 3, successful school
  - under MS Accountability System (made performance goal or met growth expectation)
- Both schools met Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind- in the areas of math and reading
- You are 1/3 of the population, yet you are **ALL** of our future

- If you think about it in those terms/ you're all under a lot of pressure and you have great expectations to live up to
- I know it gets hard some time and you may want to give up/ I know I was a teenager once
  - The key though is not to quit, but to persevere
  - Don't let anything - whether its drugs or questionable behavior stop you from reaching your goals and your full potential
- My parents always taught us the importance of having a good education
  - It can take you anywhere/ it can open any door
  - With a good education there are no limits to what **YOU** can accomplish
- I'm a living testament to that
  - I'm from a town many of you probably have never heard of (TELL YOUR STORY)

- Yet, I became a senator, Lt. Governor and now Governor
  
- Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to compromise.”
  
- Some other states are willing to compromise- but Mississippi isn’t one of them
  
- I believe in you/ your parents believe in you/ your teachers and your counselors believe in you
  
- We’re showing our belief in you by keeping sight of our priorities
  - Education and Job Creation
  - What I’ve focused on the last three years as governor
  - Public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and the key to a successful economy

- We've accomplished a lot, but it hasn't been easy
  - Every state impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - June 2003 Report from Bureau of Labor Statistics: 9.4 million Americans out of work- NAFTA 41,000 to Mexico
  - Alabama, Texas and Florida are raising taxes and Arkansas is cutting services
  
- Mississippi has refused to follow
  
- Image of Mississippi in 2003 far different than the image most know
  - Moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - Competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - Setting new standards for education and economic development
  
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education

- Teacher pay/ 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
- Computers in the Classroom
- Accountability
  - Princeton Review: 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in the nation
  - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
  - Our test scores are improving
  - We announced that with our State Accountability system, more than 80% of Mississippi public schools have achieved a rating of Level 3/ Successful or higher
  - Under the federal NCLB accountability system, 50% of MS schools met the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for reading/language arts and math
  - NCLB score: Alabama – 33%, Delaware – 43%, Tennessee – 53%, and Florida 13%
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers

- Historic action of funding education first
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
  - Serious about giving you every advantage we can/ every advantage you deserve to compete on the national level
- Mississippi has experienced significant growth over the past three years
- We are aggressive about creating good paying, quality jobs for all Mississippians
  - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 56,000 new jobs
  - Total investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion
- Your living in an exciting time in Mississippi with unprecedented opportunities
- Continue the good work/ it will all pay off

- Thank you for letting me talk to you here today.