

May 6, 2002

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Address»
«City», Mississippi «Zip»

Dear «Title» «Last»:

I want to thank you for writing me regarding the funding of education in Mississippi. I want to first assure you that education remains my top priority.

My office was required by state law to announce mandatory reductions to education funding this past February. It is the Legislature's responsibility to appropriate money, but the Governor is charged with "balancing the checkbook." I vetoed the budget last spring when it was passed by the Legislature because it was built on overly optimistic revenue projections.

Working together during this past legislative session, the Legislature and I reached common ground on several priorities that are important to the citizens of Mississippi, including educating our children, creating jobs and protecting our communities. The Legislature increased its initial budget recommendation for education to equal that of mine, which fully funds the teacher pay raise, funds the Adequate Education Program at its current level, and provides school supplies for our teachers. We have to give our schools and our teachers the tools for success, not unfunded mandates.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts regarding education funding with me. It is always encouraging to see a community's enthusiasm and support for its schools.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM: klr