

*Remarks to the  
Mississippi Health Care Association  
May 29, 2003*

- Story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities
- Priorities for Mississippi = education / jobs / health care
  - All key to improving state's image
- Our shared work is another reason Mississippi is taking on a different image
  - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development
  - A state that is committed to the health and well-being of its people
- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states
- Every state impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Best way to do that is through investing in education, jobs and health care
  - Healthy kids go to school ready to learn
  - Healthy adults are ready to work
  - Healthy state is ready to succeed
- Education as priority
  - Public schools are cornerstones of our communities and a key to successful economy
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Princeton Review: 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Leading other states in preparedness for "No Child Left Behind" / USA Today article
  - Computers in the Classroom
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
  - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
  - No longer a state that depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
- Strong growth over past 3 years
  - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 53,000 new jobs
  - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion
- Opening of Nissan last Tuesday
  - \$1.4 billion investment by Nissan
  - 5,300 direct jobs / 26,000 indirect jobs
- Not just changing economic landscape of Mississippi
  - Changing economic landscape of our people
- Working to improve health landscape as our people as well
  - Positive change happening despite national recession
- Making improvements in areas affecting every Mississippian
  - Certain issues and debates require special session
    - Advantage Mississippi
    - Teacher pay
    - Civil justice reform
- After more than a decade of attempts, history has proven civil justice reform couldn't be passed during regular legislative session
  - Demands full focus and attention of Legislature
  - That's what I gave the people of Mississippi last year
- We made great progress, particularly with health care providers
  - We were facing a crisis in health care that demanded leadership
- Before calling special session, I developed fair and balanced plan for both short-term and long-term solutions
  - Looked to the health care industry and many in this room for suggestions and ideas
  - Thanks for your help and commitment
- Your commitment has been strong with regards to Medicaid as well
  - There are those who say we spend too much on Medicaid
  - I say they are wrong
  - I've fought and will continue to fight for full funding

- Medicaid provides health care to more than 700,000 people / more than a quarter of our population
  - Mississippi has the best federal match of any state
    - Nearly 77 cents for every dollar
- With this kind of match, it only makes sense to continue investing in health care for our people
- There have been attempts to cut Medicaid funding
  - Again, you've been there to help make sure this didn't happen
  - Because of your help, it didn't happen
- Additional flexibility for Rica Lewis Payton means greater savings and continued services
  - Thank Rica for her good work
  - Working with her to implement cost-containment measures and accountability while ensuring quality health care
- I fully support maintaining level of services to nursing home residents as well
  - More than 80 percent of nursing home residents in Mississippi receive Medicaid
  - They are our fathers and our mothers / black and white
- We owe it to them
  - We also owe it to you
- There are those who believe Medicaid is nothing more than a welfare program
  - That is wrong
  - That's not what it means to our senior citizens, our disabled citizens, our children served by the program
- Medicaid is a commitment to our people
  - It's a commitment I plan to keep
- In the end, all our work is focused on the future of Mississippi and one simple question
  - What do we want?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities
- Making that happen requires cooperation and listening to each other
  - I have always listened to leaders in communities around Mississippi / leaders like each of you here today
  - You know what the needs are
  - You can help the change happen

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
  - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
  - It's an image of healthy children learning and healthy adults working
  
- Thank you for the role you're playing in changing the image