

*Remarks for the
Newborn Screening Press Conference
June 6, 2003*

■ Recognize Dr. Amy with Mississippi

Department of Health

- Also Nancy Helman, Chair of March of Dimes Program Services Committee
- Special thanks to Robin Haygood
 - Through personal tragedy, you have made a difference for generations of Mississippi's children to come

■ On April 11, 2002, I signed House Bill 717

- Known as the “Ben Haygood Comprehensive Newborn Screening Program”
- Robin is here to share her story about the passage of this act

- The greatest natural resource we have in Mississippi – or in the world, for that matter – is our children
 - There is nothing more precious or more important to our future

- It's been said our children are the message we send to a time we won't see
 - That message needs to be strong and healthy

- Through our state's comprehensive newborn screening program, Mississippi's message will be strong
 - We are now screening for a total of 40 genetic disorders in newborns
 - First state in the nation with such an extensive program

- All our work is focused on building a better future for Mississippi
 - We are investing in education first
 - We are fighting to create quality, high-paying jobs
 - We are looking for genetic disorders that could affect any of our children

- Robin and her husband, Vince, lost their son, Ben, because of a genetic disorder that could have been caught
 - They have faced every parent's nightmare
 - They have fought to make sure it doesn't happen again

- Want to thank them for their commitment to this issue and determination in making a difference
 - Today, we celebrate that difference
 - We celebrate the difference in the lives of Mississippi's children
 - We celebrate and honor the life of Ben Haygood
 - Thank you