

*Remarks for the
Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools Institute
May 2, 2003*

- Mississippi is taking on a different image
 - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- 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 and creating jobs

- Education is our first priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
 - Public schools are our cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy.

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 6th best testing system in nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
 - 6th in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers

- One of the most exciting successes in education is in technology
 - Every public school classroom in the state has Internet-accessible computer
 - Mississippi first state in the nation to achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA

- Mississippi's investing in education
 - Increasing investment while others are cutting
 - That is significant in light of national recession
 - Demonstrates our priority / our commitment

- Efforts in education didn't just start this year
 - Have been working on this since I took office
 - We are making strong progress

- More progress to be made in ensuring students have safe environment in which to learn
 - Need to be free of fear and free to focus
 - Schools should be safe havens for learning

- We're fighting to make sure this is the case
 - Frank Melton at Bureau of Narcotics shares my commitment to drug-free youth
 - Pleased to have him helping lead the charge against those who would profit through the destruction of our promise and potential

- Encourage parents and teachers to play an active role as well
 - Talk with your kids / communication is vital
 - Let them know you support them

- When they know they've got your backing, they're going to make the right decisions
 - They're going to see they've got a future
 - To get there, they need education
 - They need dreams, not drugs

- 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

- *(You may want to say something here about vetoing the bill that would have put Dept. of Education under the Personnel Board)*

- 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
 - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 50,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi of \$14.1 billion

- We are putting our people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
 - Nissan plant opening in May / only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,000 direct jobs
 - Even more from suppliers

- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
 - They're coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
 - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
 - One of top 10 states for small business survival

- Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities

- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer
 - They realize the image has changed

- There is so much opportunity out there for our young people
 - Let's continue working together to make sure they grab those opportunities

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- 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 global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- It's an image of kids making the right decisions, learning in safe environments, and living up to their promise and potential
- Appreciate your help in making that happen