

For Immediate Release

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Governor Musgrove Refusing to Back Off From Teacher Pay Raise Issue

After months campaigning for governor and now two and a half months into his administration, Governor Ronnie Musgrove is fighting harder than ever to get the teacher pay raise bill passed in this legislative session. Governor Musgrove, along with other recently elected statewide officials campaigned on the teacher pay raise issue, and he is more determined than ever to see that the issue is addressed, and committed to, by the legislature during the current session.

“I believe that raising teacher pay is the most critical issue facing the people of the State of Mississippi,” said Musgrove. “I will do everything that I can to make sure the legislature listens to our people and realizes the importance of passing the teacher pay bill now.”

Musgrove has introduced a multi-year plan, using the budget figures provided by the legislature, to pay for teacher raises. The Governor’s plan does not call for cutting any programs or raising taxes. “The plan has been developed using the budget figures provided by the legislature and takes into account any built-ins that are currently committed to by the legislature,” said the Governor. “Some people are saying it just can’t be done, and I disagree. The legislature’s own numbers show that it can be done, and I have shown it in black and white.”

Mississippi is lagging \$6,000 to \$7,000 behind the Southeastern Average in teacher salaries. “It is imperative that we put a plan into place this year,” said Governor Musgrove. “If we commission studies and continue to belabor the issue, then we have waited too late and we will be even further behind the southeastern average.” “We have studied the issue and we know the facts. The facts are, we are losing good teachers to other states and other professions because in Mississippi we haven’t made education a priority.”

The Governor is adamant about the fact that legislators must make a commitment to Mississippi teachers and students to improve education by putting the teachers pay raise bill into statute this year. “Making teacher pay raise a statute, will ensure that teachers’

salaries will be raised, and no other issues can take priority in years to come,” said the Governor.

The first bill Governor Musgrove signed into law, in his administration, was the Critical Teacher Shortage Program. This program sets aside \$1.4 million to entice young people into the teaching profession. The funds will be used for students’ tuition, books, room and meals. The Governor believes in the Critical Teacher Shortage Program, and he believes in the teacher pay raise plan. “I am greatly concerned that we are promoting teaching as a noble profession, and we expect our teachers to live a life of poverty because their salary levels are so low.”

“All of us need to work together to make the teacher pay raise happen,” said Governor Musgrove. “After all, we are entrusting our children, the future leaders of our State, to our teachers, and we must pay our teachers accordingly for such an important responsibility.”

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