

**For Immediate Release**  
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**Governor Ronnie Musgrove's statement regarding state budget reservations and cuts:**

We are in a financial situation that requires us to make tough decisions, and we are taking a financially responsible approach to the state budget.

We have called for a 3% reservation for public education, a 5% reservation for community and junior colleges and universities and a 5% cut from state source special funds. These education reservations give us the ability to restore money to these departments if revenue collections increase.

We are taking action now in order to give the departments an opportunity to absorb the reserves and cuts over a five-month period, and we hope that money will be available to restore some of these funds at the end of the fiscal year.

Education is our top priority. All of our state educators recognize that education is the cornerstone on which we build opportunities for more good jobs for our people. Education along with access to health care and other services directly impact the quality of life of all Mississippians.

We have met with education leaders and the presidents of community and junior colleges and universities to talk about the budget, and its affect on education. They are committed to providing excellent educational opportunities for our people, and to doing more, with less.

They have agreed to join forces with us to look for short, intermediate and long term solutions to the state's budget needs for education.

One solution we have presented to the members of the Legislature is a proposal to use AMS settlement funds to pay for one-time expenditures. Using AMS funds will free up general fund dollars that can be used for recurring expenses, and allow us to continue providing quality services to our people.

This will not stop the progress we have made in providing better educational opportunities for the people of Mississippi. We are committed to paying our teachers.

We are committed to raising their salaries to the southeastern average. We are giving them the tools they need to provide a quality education to our children, and our goal to place a computer in every classroom by the end of 2002 is on schedule. Our educational opportunities in Mississippi are endless. Education is our priority, and in Mississippi we are committed to making education stronger and better for our children.

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