

USA Today

June 23, 2003

And

June 24, 2003

There are several points that can be made about the two stories from USA Today.

- A majority of the states that scored better than Mississippi in the analysis have raised taxes or cut services in order to balance their budgets
 - Under the Governor's leadership, Mississippi has not raised taxes or cut services.
 - Mississippi has weather the storm of the national recession better than most states.
 - By placing our priorities on Education and Job Creation Mississippi has put our schools first and brought quality high paying jobs to the people of our state.
 - Mississippi has had a balanced budget each year under Governor Musgrove.

- The fundamental difference between Georgia (which was ranked first) and California (which was ranked last) is the power of the Governor to set the revenue estimate.
 - When the legislative budget committee overestimated revenue projections, Governor Musgrove ordered state agencies to only plan on spending 95% of their appropriation, in anticipation of budget cuts.
 - The Governors plan helped prepare the state when revenue fell short of projections.
 - This month, the Governor proposed a plan to take the politics out of estimating the states revenues by appointing a five-member committee made up of professional business people. The estimate of the committee would be the estimate that the legislature and governor would have to use.
 - The Governor's revenue estimate has been accurate and his conservative fiscal policies have help Mississippi through these tough economic times.

- The analysis is fundamentally flawed in that it only considers spending growth and not the impact of raising taxes or cutting services on the people of the state.