

## Mississippi State Employees Information Sheet

The following is a list of **Governor Ronnie Musgrove's** efforts on behalf of the state employees of Mississippi, since the beginning of the 2000 legislative session:

- 1) actively pushed for the creation of a Mississippi Department of Labor during 2000 session (and has supported such legislation in subsequent legislative sessions)
- 2) warned against legislative overspending that would place state agencies in serious funding dilemmas for future fiscal years, suggested 1% budget growth that would protect state jobs (Legislature ignored recommendation and budgeted at 3.7%, creating serious deficits in FY 2002 and FY 2003 that we are now dealing with)
- 3) proposed use of around \$100 million in incoming tobacco settlement payments to fund health care in the state of Mississippi for FY 2003 that would have stabilized budget and prevented any possibility of layoffs at state agencies
- 4) **\*\*Important\*\*** Budget priorities for FY 2003 (proposed during 2002 Legislative Session) – 2 out of 3 of the Governor's priorities would directly benefit state employees (see copy of page in a handout distributed to legislature, media, and general public during budget hearings)
  - a. suggested a 10% pay raise for all state employees over a five year period in his State of the State speech (encouraged legislators to draft legislation for state employees similar to teacher pay bill) – legislators did not act on this suggestion, supported legislative alternative as last resort (variable compensation)
  - b. suggested stabilization and enhancement of state employees health insurance plan – would have invested more state funds than ever before in the program, eliminating the deductible and creating a co-pay plan for employees and dependents
- 5) fought against unnecessary overspending on private prison contracts so that more money would be available for state facilities and corrections employees (this included a veto of the \$54 million private prison set aside in the MDOC 2002 budget)
- 6) took issue publicly with preferential treatment of Jackson YMCA by Legislature (vetoed \$1.6 million YMCA set aside in 2002 DHS budget due to the fact that it would take away much needed funds from an already struggling agency)
- 7) continued push for agency director "flexibility" – would give agency heads an opportunity to manage and direct funds within their agency (this would be a departure from the outdated method of having the legislature "line-item" and divert funds within an agency's budget), this would give agency directors the ability to cut top-heavy administrative costs, direct funds for much-needed pay raises in many areas and allow them to shift funds in order to avoid layoffs

- 8) devoted his personal attention and lobbied very hard for the passage of a “donated leave” bill and was successful in getting such a bill passed in the 2003 session (SB2317), signed donated leave bill into law in March 2003
- 9) 2003 legislative session, led the fight against appropriation bill language that would have forced individual state agencies to pick up new costs of employees’ health insurance w/out appropriating additional funds – this would mean that increases would have been absorbed in the deductible amount, raising annual deductibles from **\$450 to anywhere from \$900 to \$1200**, threatened veto of every budget bill and forced Legislature to reconsider