

Mississippi's Opportunities Offered and Afforded To Every Person In The State

As the Governor of the State of Mississippi, it is my honor, it is my duty, my responsibility, and indeed it is my pleasure to provide leadership to every citizen of the State of Mississippi.

Every person in this state is entitled to quality educational opportunities. Every person in this state is entitled fairness, and they are entitled to a justice system that works for everyone.

Our state is made up of white citizens and black citizens. Our law enforcement is made up of white citizens and black citizens. Our schools are made up of a diverse population. Our communities are made up of a diverse population, and every one of the 2.7 million people in our state deserve to know that no stone will be unturned when it comes to treating people fairly. That is what we intend to do. That is the kind of leadership we intend to offer. That is why I want to commend and thank the Marion County Sheriff's Department and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, both of whom saw the need for calling in the FBI, to make sure we had a full, complete and exhaustive investigation in this matter. The family of Raynard Johnson deserves that. And so does every citizen in the state of Mississippi. But not only does every citizen of this state deserve that, but those people who are outside the borders of our state deserve to know that every citizen in our state will be treated fairly and justly and the opportunities that our state offers are opportunities that are afforded to not just a few, but are offered and afforded to everyone. That's important because everything we do must go to the benefit of all of our citizens. That is also why I am here to tell you that if any lead, if any evidence, if anything is brought forward that would further information on this investigation, we will pursue it to the fullest extent. We also know where we are today. What the facts are and what the evidence leads to and what the medical examinations prove. It is just as Dr. Baden says, and it is just as Colonel Claiborne says, that this was a self-inflicted death.

Our hearts go out to the Johnson family. We will continue to work every day until everyone knows that all of our citizens have equal opportunity in every part of the state regardless of who they are.

That's why developing economic growth, creating economic opportunity and extending economic prosperity to every region of this state, to every community, in every county of this state is so important.

We are one state. - We are one community. - We are one people. - And we have one future - together.

Many states take one to two years to develop their economic development plans, but I am impatient for progress. It is important that we move forward now.

For those of you who may think we haven't been working hard on this economic development plan, let me tell you what we've been working on.

We are developing a plan that is comprehensive, one that addresses the needs of the business and industry.

Mississippi's greatest resource is her people. We must focus on creating a better-educated workforce that is ready for training and retraining.

We must expand prosperity to all regions of the state, and create incentives that will attract and expand business and industries throughout Mississippi.

State government must be responsive and responsible. Accountability is a must. That is why we will have a long-term plan and a short-term/5-year plan. Five years will serve as a benchmark for us to review our progress, which we will then report to the people of our state.

But that's not everything, and that's not all that we want to do.

If you want to know more about that, we are going to hold a press conference in Jackson on Monday, August 7th, 2000 where I will announce a date for the special session and we will present a proposal of the economic development plan. This will give us time to share, and review, the plan with our legislators and our citizens.

We are creating a plan that is comprehensive, and will effect long-term sustainable economic growth.

I want the people of Mississippi to realize that economic development starts in Kokomo, and it runs through Philadelphia and goes on to Olive Branch, Long Beach and through every city and every community in our state.

We will not stop until we have economic prosperity in this state from border to border, and we will not stop until every person in this state, and as many outside the borders of our state, know what we are doing right here in MS. Once again, as they have done so many times in recent years, they will be coming to us to know how we did it because we are one Mississippi and we have one future. We have one mission, and that is to make your life better - because we are...Mississippi, America's State of Promise.