

*Remarks for the
American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators
June 17, 2002*

Thank you, Lester, for that introduction and for your service to the State of Mississippi. Our state is better because of the work you have done over the years.

I'm proud to be here today to help officially welcome you to Mississippi and the beautiful Gulf Coast. I know you will enjoy your time here, both in conference meetings and in taking in the sights and sounds of the area.

(DC plane story)

It doesn't always matter, though, what we do for a living. It's what we do for each other that makes a difference. It's what we do for our children, for our senior citizens, for those who can't do for themselves, that makes a difference.

In my State of the State address last January, I laid out four priorities for our state – jobs, education, health care and public safety. All very different priorities, but all dependent on each other for our ultimate success.

I'm proud of what we have done in the area of public safety since the tragic events of September 11. Our world changed so dramatically on that day, and the sense of security we felt before was weakened.

That sense must be strengthened again.

Here in Mississippi, I'm proud of the work that's been done by our various agencies regarding security, and especially of the work done by our Department of Public Safety. I want to recognize the great work done by Commissioner David Huggins and his staff in making Mississippi safer.

Last week, we announced a new on-line system to renew driver's licenses, making this often tedious process easier for our citizens.

Today, I'm proud to say that Mississippi is working toward the completion of a driver's license that will strengthen the security of our people. We are 80 percent complete with a new license that will include a two-dimensional bar code, mag stripe, digital imaging, optional fingerprint, and more security than any other state.

We will begin the process of converting our drivers to this new license by September, and every driver in Mississippi will carry the new license by the end of the year. We are committed to providing the greatest security possible for the people of this state, and this new license will go a long way in that effort.

And today I also want to challenge Region II of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators to make this conference a true success by bringing a new driver's license standard to the National Governors Association meeting – a standard that will be used nationwide to provide even more security for our states and our nation.

Our ultimate goal is protecting our people. We're doing it here in Mississippi, and we're doing it across the nation. By working together on a standard license, we can renew that sense of security that was weakened on September 11.

It is great to have you here in Mississippi. I wish you the best for a very successful conference.