

NATIONAL RECESSION:

- The nation has been facing a recession for the past year and a half, affecting every state and every household.
- Mississippi has weathered this recession better than most states, keeping critical state services operating for the people of Mississippi.
- We've remained disciplined and focused, but our work is not finished.
- Record number of states facing serious budget issues – not Republican or Democratic issues, but issues about how to serve the needs of the people.
- We must continue to make difficult decisions and set priorities.

EDUCATION:

- I've always had one main priority for the state of Mississippi – education. It's the foundation for everything we do in economic development, health care, and public safety.
- My budget backs up that priority and puts "Schools First," with 62% of the budget going toward education.
- We have had some great achievement in education.
 - Test scores are up. The Princeton Review ranked our testing system 6th in the nation.
 - More than 1,000 board-certified teachers, the 6th highest number in the nation.
 - According to SREB, 62% of our high school graduates are going to college – the 10th highest number in the nation.
 - First state to host Leadership Summit on Higher Education.
 - One of six states to participate in pilot program on "No Child Left Behind," because of our "infectious enthusiasm and commitment to students."
- It's time to step up our commitment to education, and make a difference for our children and for Mississippi.
- My budget fully funds the teacher pay raise, restores the Mississippi Adequate Education Program to the 2004 funding level, and replaces one time money for adequate education.
 - Also works toward fewer children in each classroom and more counselors in schools.
 - Works toward getting rid of temporary classrooms that have somehow become permanent. It's time for teachers and children to focus on learning, not on leaking roofs.

EDUCATION (continued):

- Addresses the exodus of great minds from our universities and junior and community colleges, calling for \$200 million to recruit and retain the best minds in Mississippi.
- We've invested hundreds of millions in buildings. It's time to invest in people.
- Education is priority number one.

SAFETY:

- Work cannot and does not stop with education, however.
- Our state and our nation are living under a different mindset since 9/11.
 - New threats demand new measures to ensure the safety and security of our people.
- I propose \$20 Million for the enforcement of homeland security measures, supporting the work of MEMA, the Department of Public Safety, the Health Department, and the Mississippi National Guard.

JOBS:

- My budget also builds on the work we've done to grow Mississippi.
- Since January 2000, we grown Mississippi through:
 - More than 1,700 new and expanded facilities;
 - Over 47,000 new jobs, 21,000 of them through expansions of existing industry;
 - \$12.9 billion invested in the state.
- Nissan with its 5,300 jobs and \$1.5 billion investment is great, but equally important is the fact that Mississippi is one of the top 10 states in the nation for small business survival.
- My budget calls for an increase in funding for economic development, including \$20 million to improve infrastructure through safe roads and bridges.

ADMINISTRATIVE:

- My budget makes hard decisions and set priorities in tough economic times.
- Every Mississippi family has had to sacrifice; it's time for government to sacrifice as well.
- That is why I am proposing a decrease of 12.9 percent for the administrative functions of our state.

CLOSING:

- There are challenges ahead of us in the coming year, but that's nothing new.
- What is new is the manner in which I want to take on those challenges, and turn them into opportunities for our people.
- The people of Columbus and Lowndes County needed bold and decisive action after Sunday night's devastating storms.
- The people of Mississippi want bold and decisive action, and this budget fits the bill.