

*Remarks for the  
“Click It or Ticket” Press Conference  
May 6, 2002*

Good morning. In my State of the State address in January, I discussed four priorities for Mississippi – one of which was public safety.

Today, we’re here to continue our fight to save lives of individuals and families statewide.

The “Click It or Ticket” seat belt campaign is proving to be an effective weapon in that fight.

This effort focuses on the importance of wearing a seatbelt. The simple act of pulling the belt across and securing it takes only a few seconds, but can ensure a lifetime.

Traffic crashes are the third leading cause of death for all Americans; only cancer and heart attacks claim more American lives.

Every 14 seconds someone in America is injured in a traffic accident and every 12 minutes someone is killed.

More than half of the adults who die in crashes are unrestrained and six out of ten children who die in crashes are unrestrained.

Nearly half of these people would be alive today if they had been restrained.

But we're making a difference here.

The results speak for themselves. A recent letter from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration noted our work in achieving the largest single year reduction in motor vehicle fatalities in the state's history.

During last year's "Click It or Ticket" campaign, the number of people wearing their seatbelts increased by 12 percent, a statistic that was a major contributor to the decrease in deaths.

I want this year's campaign to be even more successful.

I know the importance of wearing a seatbelt, as do thousands of other Mississippians. It's something we can all do, and the results cannot be disputed.

Mississippi is joining this month with other states to educate its citizens, and remind them of the importance of buckling up.

The letter I mentioned before commented that “Mississippi has set an example for other states to follow.” Once again, we are making a difference – and this time the reward comes when lives are saved. I’ll take that reward any day.

I commend Commissioner Huggins, Colonel Claiborne and the men and women of the Mississippi Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies for their work on this campaign. I look forward to another year where we're setting an example, and saving lives.

Thank you.