

**Remarks for the Mississippi Federation of Democratic Women
April 26, 2003**

Mississippi's image is changing faster than ever, to an image of a state that is moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century, a state that is competing and leading in the global marketplace, a state that is setting new standards in education and economic development.

In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states.

■ Every state impacted by national recession

- More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
- More than 2 million Americans out of work
- States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

■ Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term

- Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs
- Here's where I want to start changing your image of Mississippi

- Many think of us as 48th, 49th, 50th in education
 - That's no longer true
 - Education is our first priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
 - Public schools are our cornerstones of our communities and the key to the success of our economy.

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 6th best testing system in nation

- Leading other states in preparedness for
“No Child Left Behind” / USA Today
article
- 6th in the nation in National Board
Certified Teachers

- One of the most exciting successes in
education is in technology
 - Every public school classroom in the
state has Internet-accessible computer
 - Mississippi first state in the nation to
achieve this goal / confirmed by NGA

- Other states are also watching what we've done with our investment in education
 - In my State of the State address, challenged Legislature to invest in education at 62% of budget, and fund it first
 - They rose to the challenge, and I signed legislation within next 3 weeks

- Efforts in education didn't just start this year
 - Have been working on this since I took office
 - We are making strong progress
 - It's happening because of effective leadership

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Time to change another image of Mississippi
 - No longer a state that depends on agriculture / low wage jobs
 - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people

- Since I took office in January 2000 through the end of February, we've grown like never before
 - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 50,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi of \$14.1 billion

- We are putting our people to work in highly skilled jobs with good pay
 - Nissan plant opening in May / only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.5 billion investment by Nissan / 5,000 direct jobs
 - Even more from suppliers

- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan
 - Now more than ever, Mississippi is being visited by companies
 - In the middle of national recession, we've had several companies just this week visiting sites across the state

- They are coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do
 - Site Selection magazine: Mississippi ranked as Top 10 location for new companies
 - One of top 10 states for small business survival

- Expansion magazine: 4 Mississippi cities ranked in latest survey of 50 hottest American cities for expansion or location of facilities

- When businesses read these industry publications, they see that Mississippi has something to offer

- They realize the image has changed

- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?

- Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- We get there through effective leadership and with a proven commodity

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
 - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
 - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
 - It's an image of global companies looking for a place to do business in the state

- Effective leadership is making a difference in Mississippi
 - It's important to keep that leadership in place

- This year's campaign extremely important for Mississippi
 - One of three races in the country
 - Only incumbent in the nation
 - Only Democratic governor left in the Deep South

- I've spent my career providing effective leadership for the people of Mississippi
 - My opponent has been in Washington for the last 20 years

- This will be a challenging race and I've never backed away from a challenge
 - Especially when the future of our state is at stake

■ Help keep effective leadership in place for
Mississippi

○ Help keep a Democratic governor
working for Mississippians