

*Remarks for the
Commission on the Future of East Mississippi and West Alabama
January 17, 2003*

- Story of lawyer on plane / didn't believe you were governor
 - As governor, people expect leadership
 - Leadership is action, not position

- Last week in state of the state, talked about effect of national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than a million American out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Effects of national recession hit the just and the unjust
 - Recession has no respect for political parties
 - Every state affected

- Have to deal with the impact here in MS
 - Protect people in short term / prepare for long term

- Best way to do that is through education
 - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Comprehensive plan for education
 - Teacher pay
 - Test scores
 - Computers in Classroom

- Time to go to next level
 - Summer Start program / reduce drop-out rates and increase skills
 - Save the state millions

- \$200 million “brain trust”
 - Recruit best minds for research, development, workforce training

- Investments in education benefit every Mississippian, not just students
 - People want to live in good communities
 - Good schools, good jobs, good communities

- Have called on Legislature to fund education in one comprehensive bill
 - Fund it at 62 percent of general fund
 - Time to prove to you that when it comes to education, we mean business
 - Business means jobs

- Have continued to create quality jobs during national recession
 - Nearly 50,000 new jobs in past three years / \$13.5 billion invested

- Building jobs across the spectrum
 - Nissan = \$1.5 billion investment / more than 5,000 direct jobs
 - MS also one of top 10 states for small business survival

- We have the right policies and programs in place to attract business / grow MS
 - Economic development is economic development
 - 2 people in a truck or 5,000 building a truck

- Have to create opportunities across the board
 - Rural areas hit hardest by NAFTA
 - Have to be smart and aggressive in creating jobs

- That's the driving force behind MS Rural Economic Impact Authority
 - Assistance to new and existing business
 - Training for people who have lost jobs

- As leaders in your own areas, encourage you to lead by action, not position
 - Encourage investment in education
 - Encourage investment in economic development
 - Prepare today for benefits tomorrow

- Preparation depends on cooperative action between states
 - Work together to benefit people / region

- So much potential for the east MS / west AL area
 - Need to invest now to realize full promise and potential
 - Good schools, good jobs, good communities

- Those are the results of good leadership
 - Those are the results our people demand and deserve