

*Remarks for
Gilmore's Restaurant (Mount Pleasant)
March 19, 2003*

- Recognize Rev. Lamar Walker / thank for invitation

- Difficult time for Mississippi and America
 - War (or threat of war) affects us all

- Mississippi is playing a key role
 - More than 4,000 Mississippians
deployed through Guard / Reserves
 - Serving on front lines in war on terror

■ Thousands more serving here at home as emergency responders

- Fire departments / law enforcement / ambulance services
- Their role vitally important as well
- Spoke today to First Responders conference / they are ready

■ Mississippi is ready too

- State of emergency / executive order

■ We're going to handle whatever comes along, just as we have with domestic problems facing us

- Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - More than two million Americans out of work
 - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in short term / prepare for long term

- Best way to do that is through investing in education and creating jobs
 - Everybody benefits from good schools

- Education must be first priority for MS
 - Making great progress
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Test scores up / accountability standards stronger than “No Child Left Behind”
 - Princeton Review: MS has 6th best testing system in nation
 - MS 6th in nation in National Board Certified Teachers
 - Computers in Classroom

- Keeping education a priority with a budget that puts Schools First / 62 percent
 - MS first state in nation to fully fund education and fund it first
 - Other states cutting to the bone

- We're proving to the people of MS that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

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

■ Job creation from January 2000 to February 2003

- 2,103 new and expanded facilities
- 50,253 new jobs
- Total investment of \$14.1 billion

■ MS Rural Economic Impact Authority

- \$20M to help with economic development in rural areas
- Funding to cover workforce training at community colleges

- MS's potential not exclusive to metropolitan areas
 - Promise of our people is just as strong in rural areas
 - Fighting to bring quality jobs to every Mississippian

- We have to look to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities

- There are those who would threaten our efforts to get where we want to go
 - Not going to let that happen