

*Remarks to the
National Association of Human Rights Workers
October 29, 2001*

Good morning. It is a pleasure to welcome you to the great State of Mississippi and the beautiful Mississippi Gulf Coast.

On behalf of the 2.8 million people of our state, let me say that we are proud you have chosen Mississippi for this year's meeting.

Great things are happening in this state, and they're happening because people are working together.

Generations of children will benefit from the work being done in education. We are going to pay our teachers like the professionals they are; and Mississippi will rise from 49th in the nation to 19th in the nation in average teacher salary.

We are preparing our children for the new economy of the 21st century, an economy that will be borderless, wireless and global. And we're doing it by putting an internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state.

By the time we finish this project at the end of next year, Mississippi will be the first state in the nation to reach this goal.

We are addressing the health care needs of all Mississippians by looking at new and creative ways to ensure quality health care for everyone.

I went to a football game between Tennessee and LSU a few weeks ago up in Knoxville. My son and I were looking out over the crowd, and he remarked to me that there must be 10,000 different ways to wear orange.

I thought about that statement more in the days after the game, and it struck me that it also applied to what we're doing here.

In Mississippi, we're looking for 10,000 different ways to business and improve the quality of life for all our people. There are things that have never been tried before in our state – never again.

We are going to create our own opportunities, and we're already working hard at it.

I like to say that Mississippi is “America’s state of promise.” We have the promise of our people, our resources, and an innate desire to set a new standard for excellence among the states.

I believe you’ll see that promise while you’re here, and I believe you’ll tell others at home about it when you return.

We’re proud to have you in Mississippi. I wish you the very best during your time here.

Thank you.

