

*Remarks for the
“Abstinence Works” Rally
May 2, 2003*

Good morning – it is great to be here this morning and it is great to see these young people here – young people who represent the promise and potential of Mississippi!

I want to begin by saying that I’m proud of every child in Mississippi, proud of the tremendous hope they represent and proud of the decisions they are making to make the most of their God-given talents.

Every young person here today, and every young person in this state, has a strong future ahead of them – strong because we are working to turn obstacles into opportunities; strong because the right individual choices are being made; strong because the image of this state is changing like never before.

We've been fighting as hard as we can to make sure our children have the best education possible, and we're getting the job done through aggressive programs to raise teacher pay, to provide the best technology through Internet-accessible computers in every public school classroom, and to attract quality, high-paying jobs to the state.

But a key part of our success comes when great young people like these here today make mature decisions about their own lives and what they want to accomplish – and the numbers prove the right decisions are being made.

Teen pregnancies are down dramatically since 1997. This is great news for Mississippi. Our children have great gifts and talents, and we are going to continue protecting and promoting their incredible potential.

Helping other young Mississippians make the right decision is the focus of our rally today, and I'm proud to present this proclamation today in support of the "Just Wait" Abstinence Campaign.

(read proclamation)