

*Remarks for the  
Mississippi Medical and Surgical Association  
May 3, 2003*

- Recognize Dr. Reginald Rigsby (introduces you)
  
- Mississippi is taking on a different image
  - Image of a state moving faster than anyone else into the 21<sup>st</sup> century
  - A state that's competing and leading in the global marketplace
  - A state that's setting new standards in education and economic development

- We're taking on that new image and setting new standards during difficult times
  - Impact of national recession
  - \$7 trillion lost in stock market / 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs
  
- Working to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Do that through investing in education, creating jobs, and quality health care
  
- Education is priority / has been for past three years since I've been in office
  - Mississippi is a recognized leader in education

## ■ Great progress

- Teacher pay
- Princeton Review: 6<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
- Leading in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
- 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
- Computers in the Classroom
- 62% of high school graduates going to college

## ■ When it comes to education, we mean business

- Business means jobs

- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
  - No longer a state that depends on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
  
- Strong growth over past 3 years
  - 2,103 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 50,000 new jobs
  - Total business investment in Mississippi of \$14.1 billion
  
- We gained the attention of companies around the world when we landed Nissan

- Word is out about what we can do
  - Site Selection magazine: 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

- Working hard to strengthen image in health care as well
  - We're accomplishing some great things
    - CHIP is covering kids – from 500 in 2000 to more than 50,000
    - Increased flexibility for Rica Lewis Payton at Medicaid
    - Efforts in disease management
    - Health summits across the state in 2001

- Want to make it easier for you to focus on health care and not on business of health care
  - May 2002: Discussed medical malpractice issue at MEC luncheon
  - Called special session to address urgent needs
  
- Some relief came out of that session, but Legislature waited on my proposal for insurance pool
  - Pleaded legislation was passed this year creating Medical Malpractice Insurance Availability Act
  - Signed it April 24

- Remain committed to fair and balanced reforms that will strengthen both the quality of health care and your ability to deliver it
  - This is important for all Mississippians and our future
  - Healthy kids go to school ready to learn
  - Healthy adults are ready to work
  - That's good for all of us
  
- We're looking to the future of MS / where do we want to go?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities



- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - 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
  
- It's an image of a state with tremendous potential for its people in education, jobs and health care
  - That's an image we're creating together

- Want to build our future based on what our future can be
  - Not on what our past has been
  - Appreciate your role and help in making that happen