

*Remarks to the  
Mississippi State Medical Association  
June 1, 2003*

- Story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities
  
- Priorities for Mississippi = education / jobs / health care
  - All key to improving state's image
  
- Our shared work is another reason 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

- A state that is committed to the health and well-being of its people
  
- In today's economy, Mississippi is like many other states
  
- Every state impacted by national recession
  - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
  - More than 2 million Americans out of work
  - States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

- Have to protect people in the short term while preparing for the long term
  - Best way to do that is through investing in education, jobs and health care
  - Healthy kids go to school ready to learn
  - Healthy adults are ready to work
  - Healthy state is ready to succeed
  
- Education as priority
  - Public schools are cornerstones of our communities and a key to successful economy
  
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented

- Princeton Review: 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind” / USA Today article
  - Computers in the Classroom
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- We’re proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we’re serious about education
    - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow

- When it comes to education, we mean business
  - Business means jobs
  
- Another image of Mississippi that's changing
  - No longer a state that depends solely on agriculture / low wage jobs
  - We are aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people
  
- Strong growth over past 3 years
  - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
  - More than 53,000 new jobs
  - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- Opening of Nissan last Tuesday
  - Only auto plant opening in America this year
  - \$1.4 billion investment by Nissan
  - 5,300 direct jobs / 26,000 indirect jobs
  
- Not just changing economic landscape of Mississippi
  - Changing economic landscape of our people
  
- Working to improve health landscape as our people as well
  - Positive change happening despite national recession

- Making improvements in areas affecting every Mississippian
  - Certain issues and debates require special session
    - Advantage Mississippi
    - Teacher pay
    - Civil justice reform
  
- After more than a decade of attempts, history has proven civil justice reform couldn't be passed during regular legislative session
  - Demands full focus and attention of Legislature
  - That's what I gave the people of Mississippi last year

- We made great progress, particularly with health care providers
  - We were facing a crisis in health care that demanded leadership
  
- Before calling special session, I developed fair and balanced plan for both short-term and long-term solutions
  - Looked to the health care industry and many in this room for suggestions and ideas
  - Thanks for your help and commitment

- Your commitment has been strong with regards to Medicaid as well
  - There are those who say we spend too much on Medicaid
  - I say they are wrong
  - I've fought and will continue to fight for full funding
  
- Medicaid provides health care to more than 700,000 people – our children, the elderly and the disabled / more than a quarter of our population
  - Mississippi has the best federal match of any state
    - Nearly 77 cents for every dollar

- With this kind of match, it only makes sense to continue investing in health care for our people
  
- There have been attempts to cut Medicaid funding
  - My budget / \$393 million for Medicaid
  - Again, you've been there to help make sure this didn't happen
  - Because of your help, it didn't happen
  
- Recent tax bill signed in Washington
  - Additional assistance for Medicaid / \$112 million

- Additional flexibility for Rica Lewis Payton means greater savings and continued services
  - Thank Rica for her good work
  - Working with her to implement cost-containment measures and accountability while ensuring quality health care
  
- Medicaid is a commitment to our people
  - It's a commitment I plan to keep

- In the end, all our work is focused on the future of Mississippi and one simple question
  - What do we want?
  - Good schools / good jobs / good communities
  
- Making that happen requires cooperation and listening to each other
  - I have always listened to leaders in communities around Mississippi / leaders like each of you here today
  - You know what the needs are
  - You can help the change happen

- The image of the Mississippi of 2003 is unlike anything anyone could have imagined
  - It's an image of people working in highly-skilled, well-paying jobs
  - It's an image of children in classrooms equipped with the technology to bring the world to their desk
  - It's an image of healthy children learning and healthy adults working
  
- Thank you for the role you're playing in changing the image