

*Remarks for the
Northrop Grumman Bill Signing (SB 2886)
April 10, 2003*

- Recognize Dr. Phil Dur, Paul Robinson, Bob Rohrlack, Lt. Gov. Tuck

Today is a significant day for the State of Mississippi, significant in the fact that we are once again demonstrating our commitment to realizing the promise and potential of our state and our people.

We are doing so through our partnership with Northrop Grumman, in a joint effort to improve the shipbuilding facilities that produce ships like this one we're on today.

The bill I am signing today is the result of hard work and negotiations between Northrop Grumman and the state, and I appreciate the efforts of Dr. Dur and his team in this effort.

The image of Mississippi has changed, and it has changed because of innovative partnerships and investments like the one we are completing today. It's changed to an image of a state that is moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century, a state that is competing and leading in the global marketplace, a state that is setting new standards in education and economic development.

We're no longer a state that depends on agricultural or low-wage jobs. We're being aggressive about creating quality, high-paying jobs for our people.

We're putting our people to work in highly-skilled jobs, like these here at Northrop Grumman – the state's largest private employer with more than 11,000 jobs.

We're continuing to gain the attention of other companies around the world. They're coming to Mississippi because the word is out about what we can do. They know that *Site Selection* magazine ranked Mississippi as one of the Top 10 locations for new companies.

They know we are ranked as one of the top 10 states for small business survival.

They know that *Expansion Management* magazine has ranked 4 Mississippi cities in its latest survey of the 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.

We're looking to the future of Mississippi, and charting where we want to go. Our end goal is to build on our promise and potential, and to build a state based on good schools, good jobs and good communities.

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 companies like Northrop Grumman doing business in the state, with Mississippians building state-of-the-art ships for our nation's military.

I'm proud of the work we've done together to get to this point, and I look forward to the successes the lie ahead for us.

That said, it will be my pleasure to sign Senate Bill 2886 into law.

(move to table and sign bill)