

*Remarks for the
Special Session Press Conference
August 23, 2002*

I am calling a special session for Thursday, September 5. The initial call will be for the Legislature to provide the necessary appropriation for the Department of Corrections at \$48.6 million.

Once this issue is resolved and on its way to my desk for my signature, I will expand the call of the session to address the availability and affordability of medical malpractice insurance, including a short-term solution to meet immediate needs of Mississippi's doctors.

The details of this call will be presented next week, and will include the suggestions of the House and Senate working groups currently studying this situation.

Since early this year, we have been working with doctors, lawyers, business people and the Legislature on the issue of the availability and affordability of medical malpractice insurance.

In May, I announced I would call a special session to address this issue.

Once legislation has been passed that we believe solves this crisis and is directed to my desk for my signature, then I will expand the call to include debate on the issue of civil justice reform.

We have recognized the crisis regarding medical malpractice insurance and its impact on the health care needs of the people of Mississippi.

As I said in May, if serious debate were given to the issue of civil justice reform, I would include it in a special session on the insurance issue. That's going to happen, once we address the other issues as I've laid them out today.

The people of Mississippi are demanding – and they deserve – solutions to these issues. I want them to have those solutions on September 5.