

Stennis Press Lunch Talking Points
Monday, November 6, 2000
12:00 p.m.
George Street Grocery

1. Budget

- We are making sure that the people of MS have strong schools, quality healthcare options and safe communities and homes
- We have made our people's priorities – our priorities.
- For the first time, we presented our budget to the Committee at the beginning of the budget process.
- We have taken a progressive approach to budgeting that includes more accountability and few excuses
- We have shared with the Committee our priorities for funding and given them a plan of action to implement the budget
 - i. 8.25% growth rate – too optimistic for FY 2001
 - ii. We must stabilize our budget
 - iii. We must be responsible in our spending

- iv. We have the support of agency directors
- v. We will maximize federal funds
- Working with the Legislature in the budgeting procedure lends our process credibility
- We intend on meeting the needs of our people so they can enjoy a good Quality of Life, right here in MS.

2. Why are you cutting IHL/University budgets?
Will this impact services? Or financial aid?

- Faced with a slowdown in revenue
- Must begin to develop a strategy to fully restore funding for IHL.
- Reduced funding is being felt statewide.
- Must make some hard choices and reorder our priorities.
- Adjust spending to mirror incoming revenue.
- Must be fiscally responsible.
- If we make the right decisions now, it will allow us to invest more in higher education next year.
- Our universities are not standing still – construction and growth

- i. 2001 – IHL received \$38. million bond bill
 - ii. We have worked with IHL to develop a construction project priority list for all universities in FY 2002, which totals more than \$15 million.
- Our budget recommendations for FY 2002, beginning July 1, 2001 are proactive in fully restoring IHL funding.
- Recommendations include maximizing federal dollars with a State match of general or other funds.
- We have also recommended that Student Financial Aid be fully funded.
- We must bring higher ed. opportunities to all Mississippians.
- We have pledged to work with IHL to make all of higher ed. stronger for the people of MS.

3. Technology: How did MS land the international automotive plant?

- There has been a lot of talk lately about a major company/industry locating here in MS.

- Wouldn't it be great to think that we have worked hard enough in 10 months of our administration to put MS on the map for a large company to consider us for a possible location site?
- By making dramatic changes in our economic strategy, we made MS competitive with other states.
- Leadership gave us the advantage
- Through leadership we developed a common goal, which was to give MS the competitive edge to compete successfully against our neighboring states.
- Now our job is spreading the word that MS has the right incentives and the right workforce to help make companies successful.
- Good jobs and a good quality of life make a positive difference to our people.

4. What are your priorities for the 2001 legislative session?

- Our administration's overall goal is to improve Quality of Life for the people of Mississippi.

- i. We can do that in many areas, some of which are:
 1. economy/jobs
 2. education
 3. healthcare
 4. public safety

5. Advantage Mississippi Initiative

- Technology Propels this new economy, making borders obsolete, and trading geographic divides for digital divides.
- This New World demands that MS explore new approaches to attracting and expanding job opportunities
- Plan is not for one region over another. It helps all Mississippians in all 82 counties.
- Now MS has a management tool to sell the State
- We are in direct competition with our sister states, and we now have a competitive advantage.
- Bring World Trade Center status to MS

6. Mississippi State Flag

- The MS Supreme Court ruled that MS did not have an official state flag and coat of arms.
- Advisory Commission was created to propose and report a suggested design for the flag and coat-of-arms.
 - i. They may recommend the traditional state flag or may recommend a new design for the state flag
 - ii. They work in the advisory role only.
- The Legislature may choose to adopt the Advisory Commission's recommendations, adopt an alternative or let the registered voters of the state vote on the design of the flag.
 - i. Only the Legislature can designate a new flag or coat-of-arms.
- The Advisory Commission believes that input from the public is essential.
- Commission is holding public hearings in each congressional district.