

Campaign Countdown - Day 9 - October 26, 2003

If you aren't part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. Sorry, folks but that's just the way it is. If you are not active in getting our candidates elected, then your inaction contributes to the loss of that election. According to a poll reported today, voters would give Barbour 50%; Musgrove 45%; Tuck 54%; Blackmon 40%. If the election were held today, we'd lose. I say "we" because if Musgrove and Blackmon lose, everything we've worked for will be lost as well.

How can we know that for sure? Simple. All you have to do is look at the real picture that's facing legislators when they go into the 2004 session. Those elected will have to make some very tough budget decisions. We already know where Musgrove stands -- education and educators are his number one priority. Because of his efforts, teachers can expect an 8% salary increase next year and another 8% the following year. He made sure EEF money was restored. He was the prime architect of the Mississippi Adequate Education Act. This alone has saved the state billions of dollars by eliminating the possibility of suits for unequal education, the same suits that have been filed in dozens of states. Much of the money saved has been put into education.

Some claim he doesn't get along well with legislators. Since when are the separate branches of government supposed to be pals? Their differences are what makes a democracy work. They worked pretty well for all of us when he called the special session to remove the 5% string attached to the salary plan. If you remember, Amy Tuck, Speaker Ford, and dozens of legislators begged him not to hold the session. From the day he stepped into office, Musgrove had hammered away at legislators to pass a salary plan - even gave them a five year plan he had devised. All we heard from legislators and Amy Tuck - there is no money. **Tuck's big quote at that time was "Teachers deserve a pay raise commitment, but they deserve one that we realistically can deliver on. I do not see us being in a position to make that commitment if we want to be prudent managers of the taxpayers' money."** (source. newspapers 3/21/00) When we announced on a Saturday that we would be willing to go to jail for demonstrations over no salary increases, Tuck, by the following Monday, came up with a six-year plan tied to a 5% contingency. (Could there possibly be any link to Musgrove's five-year plan?) MAFT accompanied Musgrove to meet with the various committees of legislators to urge them to pass the plan and deal with the 5% contingency later. He was true to his word. Besides all this and many other things he's done for education, ask yourself how Musgrove was able to get education as the first funding priority in the 2003 legislative session - the only state in the nation to do this - if he couldn't get along with legislators.

So if Musgrove and Blackmon don't get elected - what can we expect? Here are a couple of good predictions. Haley's campaign has claimed that there is a serious discipline problem in our schools. We know that is not true but tell the public something long enough and they'll believe it. Who do you suppose the public thinks is lacking in discipline skills? TEACHERS!!! So why would we want to give teachers an 8% pay raise two years in a row if they can't handle their students? Answer - we shouldn't, we won't - pay raise is a goner. The \$143,000,000 saved goes back into the general fund. Of course, it likely will not be done by merely hacking off the two years of the plan. But there is a way to tell our teachers that we love them and still take away their expected salary increases. Rumors are already floating around that if Tuck gets reelected one of the first things she will have introduced is a bill to restore the 5% contingency. Since there is not a year on the horizon when the economy is expected to significantly improve, there will be no year when there is a five percent increase in revenues in Mississippi. Hence, no pay raises. Why is Tuck expected to do this? The rumor sources tell us she's angry that no teacher organization endorsed her. This is just a way to get even.

If you haven't already seen the discipline plan we may be looking forward to if Barbour gets elected, call us and we will send you a copy. (Or have us fax a copy to you at your school when you are on a break) You'll love the part where if a male teacher is put in the classroom with a female teacher to control the kids, his recommended salary is "\$50,000 annually which is more than the female teachers would make." The male is there for five basic

responsibilities, "stimulate, motivate, monitor, discipline, tie the child, home and classroom together." (Read all that as supervising head honcho in the classroom.) The female is there "because females do a better job of preparing and delivering the lessons." (Read that as lesson plans, correcting papers, filling in reports, etc., etc., etc., those things we all do now.)

There's much more. We'll be emailing you each night this week to bring you the latest information. You need to help by forwarding these messages to your members and teachers who care about what can happen to them. When you forward, include MAFT1@aol.com on the list. We want to know who's active in this campaign and who our active members are reaching. Feel free to make copies to pass around.

Finally, we need some information from you. It is totally amazing to us that any teacher would oppose a governor who has done so much for education and educators. That's like biting the hand that feeds you. Are these teachers unaware, uninformed, naive, ignorant, or what? Why would any teacher vote for a set of vague promises over a proven record of action? Why would any teacher want to jeopardize their salaries, their supply money, their future by slapping at the very person who has made it his sixteen-year career of service in Mississippi to assuring changes that do nothing but improve education and the lot of educators? Somebody please clue us in so we can be about finding a solution to this perplexing dilemma.

In the UNION SPIRIT.

Maryann L. Graczyk
President