Remarks for the
Mississippi School Counselors Association
February 21, 2003

- Recognize Amy Harvison (President, MS School Counselors Association)

- Story of Jordan / 15-point buck / priorities

- Priorities for MS / jobs and education

- Meeting these priorities not always easy, especially in schools

- Education is the priority now
  - REPRESENTS HISTORIC ACTION
  - UNPRECEDENTED COOPERATION
  - MISSISSIPPI IS MOVING FORWARD
• Impact of national recession
  o More than $7 trillion lost in stock market
  o More than two million Americans out of work
  o States cutting school week / releasing prisoners / massive lay-offs

• Effects of national recession touches everyone
  o Recession has no respect for political parties
  o Every state affected

• Have to deal with the impact here in MS
  o Protect people in short term / prepare for long term
Best way to do that is through education
  o Everybody benefits from good schools

Just as important, students benefit from qualified professionals there to help them make the most of their promise and potential
  o That’s the role you play as counselors

So many challenges and pressures on our children today
  o We have to let them know we’re there for them / committed to them
  o Thank you for helping make that commitment known
Comprehensive plan for education
  o Funding education at 62%
  o Fully funding MAEP for the first time
  o Funds teacher pay raise
  o Addresses needs of higher education

We are making a difference
  o Teacher pay from 49th to 19th
  o Computers in the Classroom
  o MS one of six states for “Following the Leaders”/ No Child Left Behind
  o Leadership Summit/six priorities from early childhood to adult learning
  o Princeton Review - #6 best testing in the nation
Investments in education benefit every Mississippian, not just students
  o People want to live in good communities
  o Good schools, good jobs, good communities

Those are the results of good leadership
  o Those are the results our people demand and deserve

The bills I signed earlier this month fund education for one year, but the fight we fought and won, changes the way we fund education forever
Gone are the days when we fund education the last week of the session

Gone are the days when our school children compete for funding with convicted felons in our prisons

Gone are the days when we shortchange our schools

Gone are the days when we shortchange our future

MISSISSIPPI HAS ENTERED A NEW ERA