

# JIM HOOD

## GOVERNOR

Today, I am reaching out to humbly ask for your support in my campaign for Governor of Mississippi, and to share with you my vision for Mississippi's families. As Governor, I will improve our public schools, fix our crumbling roads and bridges, expand access to healthcare, grow our economy and clean up state government.

In education, our state trails almost every other one. We must start our children reading earlier by providing four-year-old kindergarten statewide. We must fund our schools and pay our teachers at the Southeastern average. In order to fill the more than 1,000 teacher vacancies, we may need to temporarily suspend the Public Employees Retirement System rules to allow retired teachers to teach and still draw retirement until we can graduate more teachers with incentives, such as tuition forgiveness, if they teach here for five years. Since legislative funding has shut down many high school vocational trade skill classes, we must provide free tuition for eligible students at community colleges to provide the technical trade skills and apprenticeships to train our kids and attract industry. We are doing this in my home area and can do it statewide for about \$6 million to \$8 million per year.

In infrastructure, our state faces a crisis many of us have not seen in our lifetimes. More than 400 locally owned bridges are closed around the state, and state and local governments lack resources for improvements. Despite ignoring our crumbling transportation system for eight sessions, legislative leadership passed a smoke-and-mirrors road bill that fails to adequately meet our needs. As Governor, I will find the funding necessary to move Mississippi's transportation system forward by first cutting out the corrupt contracts handed out by the legislature.

In healthcare, our state has deteriorated under current leadership. Since 2013, five rural hospitals in Mississippi have closed due to financial constraints. A recent independent study revealed 31—nearly half—of our rural hospitals are at risk of closure. The state could have helped prevent these crises had we accepted \$1 billion per year from the federal government to increase access to healthcare and save our rural hospitals. As Governor, I will work to bring that money to Mississippi.

Our economy has been ranked the worst in the nation. Our economic growth since 2009 has been TWO percent, while Tennessee has grown 23 percent, Arkansas 13 percent and Alabama 11 percent. Our children are leaving our state at the highest rate in the nation for the past six years. They are loaded with student debt and have to leave their families here to get good jobs out-of-state. The reason for this is our legislative leadership has sold us out to huge out-of-state corporations by giving away the money we normally have for roads and education through huge tax

giveaways in exchange for campaign contributions. These so-called tax cuts will rob \$765 million per year from our \$6 billion annual state budget.

Instead of tax giveaways, we must cut taxes for working families by reducing the sales tax on groceries. Legislative leaders have had several opportunities to make this happen but have failed to do so. We will also make sure that efforts to lower the grocery tax do not harm our cities financially.

The only large source of money the state has left is PERS. If we continue the present leadership, they will declare an emergency and try to privatize it. Their Wall Street contributors and lawyers would be the only winners.

This legal corruption does not end at tax giveaways. The legislative leadership has given our money away in contracts to huge corporations. Take the prison privatization scandal, for example, where these companies gave large campaign contributions. This is happening in healthcare, education, economic development and many other areas. I will establish a transition audit committee to review these contracts and save us more than \$200 million a year.

We can clean up state government by banning corporate campaign contributions, preventing legislators from taking campaign contributions during the legislative session, requiring that legislators list who pays for their dinners and events, and making their records open to the public like every other municipal, county and public official.

I hope you will join me in this journey to save Mississippi for our families and our children. I look forward to visiting with you on the campaign trail between now and November. I respectfully ask once again for your prayers and support.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Hood". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jim Hood