

**From:** "Vestewig, Lauren J."  
**To:** "Willeford, Emily"  
**Cc:** "Kavanaugh, Brett M.", "Ulliot, Theodore W."  
**Subject:** 05-11 Political Briefing (AR)  
**Sent:** Mon, 10 May 2004 12:46:54 -0500  
[05-11 Political Briefing \(AR\).doc](#)

my suggestions. thanks.

## **ARKANSAS BRIEFING**

### **STATE ISSUES**

#### **NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND REPORT**

On April 29, the University of Arkansas released a report that was critical of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The report, which incorporates the results of a survey of twenty superintendents and 600 Arkansans, found mixed results on NCLB's testing requirements and funding, and concluded the law is "well intentioned, but seriously flawed." The report suggested that the Arkansas Legislature consider asking to be exempt from the law.

#### **OUACHITA-BLACK RIVER**

Your Administration requested an additional eight million dollars for maintenance and operation of the Ouachita-Black River navigation system as part of its Fiscal Year 2005 Budget Amendment. The Army Corps of Engineers and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) initially recommended cutting the funds normally set aside for maintaining the channel and four locks and dams along the 336-mile Ouachita-Black system in Arkansas and northern Louisiana because the system failed to meet a designated river traffic threshold. Critics, including Congressman Mike Ross (D, AR-04) (who wrote you a letter in April urging you to restore the funding), claimed the formula fails to take into account the economic impact of river traffic in the area and that the cuts would have cost hundreds of jobs. Governor Mike Huckabee (R), who announced the budget amendment on May 6, was publicly critical of Ross.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

On May 4, Governor Huckabee announced the Japanese automaker Hino would build a plant in eastern Arkansas to manufacture parts for Toyota. Hino will be the fourth Japanese auto parts manufacturer to locate in the Delta region in the past year.

### **LEGISLATURE**

The Arkansas Legislature holds biennial regular sessions and is not in regular session this year.

#### **Budget**

The State is expected to face a budget shortfall (recently estimated at \$86 million) when the next regular session convenes in January 2005, and the Legislature will have to fund the new education plan and respond to the increasing costs of Medicaid and higher education. On May 3, however, state tax officials announced net revenues were \$42 million higher than they had projected for the month of April, and state budget officials are hopeful the new figures signal an economic turnaround for the state.



## **ARKANSAS BRIEFING**

### **Education Reform**

On April 29, the Arkansas Supreme Court invited more briefs and set a May 20 date for oral arguments to determine whether state lawmakers did enough in a special session earlier this year to comply with the Court's 2002 ruling for the state to implement changes and create an "adequate and equitable" education system.

The Legislature passed a \$2.7 billion public school funding formula in February they believe will be approved by the Court. The plan would require \$385 million in new revenue, funded by seven-eighths of one cent increase in the sales tax, and would also consolidate school districts with fewer than 350 students (57 of the state's 308 school districts).

Before ruling on the Legislature's compliance with its order, the Court appointed two Special Masters (former Chief Justice Brad Jesson and former Justice David Newbern) to review the state's progress on education reform. In their first report issued in April, Jesson and Newbern praised the \$400 million in additional education spending but questioned whether the proposed tax increases are enough to support the new school funding formula. The Masters also raised concerns about a continuing gap between wealthy and poor school districts and suggested that further school consolidation would help the state afford court-ordered "adequate" education.

### **NOLAN RICHARDSON**

On May 5, a Federal district court judge began hearing arguments in a racial discrimination lawsuit filed against the University of Arkansas and the Razorback Foundation by former basketball coach Nolan Richardson. Richardson alleges he was treated harshly and fired in 2002 because he is African-American. The University maintains Richardson was fired because of his negative comments and a lack of respect for the basketball program.

### **HEALTHY ARKANSAS CAMPAIGN**

On May 4, Governor Huckabee announced a "Healthy Arkansas" campaign. The Governor, who has lost more than one hundred pounds since beginning a diet and exercise program last year, hopes the campaign will increase Arkansans' level of physical activity, lower smoking and obesity rates, and eventually lower the state's Medicaid costs.

## **ARKANSAS BRIEFING**

### **DISASTER DECLARATION**

On May 7, you declared that a major disaster exists in thirteen Arkansas counties due to severe storms that struck the state on April 19.

b(6)

## **ARKANSAS BRIEFING**

b(6)

### **STATISTICS**

#### **2000 General Election Results (Presidential):**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Win %</b>
<b>Bush</b>	472,940	51.3%
<b>Gore</b>	422,768	45.9%
<b>Nader</b>	13,421	1.5%
<b>Others</b>	12,652	1.3%

#### **1996 General Election Results (Presidential):**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Win %</b>
<b>Clinton</b>	475,171	53.7%
<b>Dole</b>	325,416	36.8%
<b>Perot</b>	69,884	7.9%
<b>Others</b>	13,791	1.6%

### **CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION**

#### **U.S. SENATE:**

- Blanche Lincoln (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 1998 with 55%
- Mark Pryor (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 2002 with 54%

#### **U.S. HOUSE: 4 Total (3D, 1R)**

- Marion Berry (D-01), 4<sup>th</sup> term, re-elected with 67%
- Vic Snyder (D-02), 4<sup>th</sup> term, re-elected without opposition
- John Boozman (R-03), 1<sup>st</sup> full term, re-elected without opposition
- Mike Ross (D-04), 2<sup>nd</sup> term, re-elected with 61%

### **STATE GOVERNMENT**

Governor Mike Huckabee (R), 2<sup>nd</sup> term, re-elected in 2002 with 53%

Lieutenant Governor Winthrop “Win” Rockefeller (R), 2<sup>nd</sup> term, re-elected in 2002 with 60%

Attorney General Mike Beebe (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected without opposition

Auditor of State Jim Wood (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 2002 with 58%

Land Commissioner Mark Wilcox (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 2002 with 59%

Secretary of State Charlie Daniels (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 2002 with 62%



## **ARKANSAS BRIEFING**

Treasurer Gus Wingfield (D), 1<sup>st</sup> term, elected in 2002 with 57%

**State House:** 100 (70D, 30R)

Speaker: Herschel W. Cleveland (D)

Majority Leader: Harmon Seawel (D)

Minority Leader: Marvin Parks (R)

**State Senate:** 35 (27D, 8R)

President: Lieutenant Governor Winthrop “Win” Rockefeller (R)

Majority Leader: Percy Malone (D)

Minority Leader: Gilbert Baker (R)

### **STATE PARTY**

**State Chairman:** Winthrop “Win” Rockefeller

**National Committeeman:** John Paul Hammerschmidt

**National Committeewoman:** Peggy Jeffries

### **STATE DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

#### **Estimated Population 2000:**

Arkansas: 2,673,400, an increase of 13.7% since 1990

National: 281,421,906, an increase of 13.1% since 1990

#### **Race/Ethnicity:**

Arkansas: 78.6% White; 15.7% African-American; 3.2% Hispanic;  
0.8% Asian

National: 69.1% White; 12.5% Hispanic; 12.3% African-American;  
3.6% Asian; 0.9% Native American

#### **Median Age:**

Arkansas: 36.0 years (14.0% are 65 years and older)

National: 35.3 years (12.4% are 65 years and older)

#### **College Educated:**

Arkansas: 16.7%

National: 24.4%

#### **Median Income:**

Arkansas: \$32,182

National: \$41,994

#### **Households:**

Arkansas: 70.2% family households; 54.3% married couple families

National: 68.1% family households; 51.7% married couple families

(Source: 2000 U.S. Census Bureau)

**6 ELECTORAL VOTES**

2004 – SENATOR BLANCHE LINCOLN (D) UP

**ARKANSAS BRIEFING****YOUR PREVIOUS TRAVEL**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
A Conversation on Job Training	April 6, 2004	El Dorado
Roundtable and Remarks on Medical Liability Reform	January 26, 2004	Little Rock
Bush-Cheney '04 Fundraiser	November 10, 2003	Bentonville
Roundtable with Small Business Owners and Employees and Remarks on the Jobs and Growth Plan	May 5, 2003	Little Rock
Victory 2002 Welcome	November 4, 2002	Bentonville
Fundraiser for Senator Hutchinson; and Roundtable and Remarks at Parkview Arts and Science Magnet High School	August 29, 2002	Little Rock
Little Rock Welcome and Conversation on Welfare Reform	June 3, 2002	Little Rock
Senator Hutchinson Finance Event and Press Conference at Adams Field Airport	April 25, 2001	Little Rock
Tour of North Little Rock Elementary School and Leadership Forum	March 1, 2001	North Little Rock

**THE VICE PRESIDENT'S PREVIOUS TRAVEL**

<b>Event</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tour and Remarks at Wal-Mart Distribution Center	May 3, 2004	Bentonville
Victory 2002 Welcome	October 30, 2002	Little Rock
Fundraiser for Senator Hutchinson	April 4, 2002	Fayetteville