

By: Representative Scott (80th)

To: Public Health and
Welfare;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 74

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
2 SERVICES TO COLLECT CERTAIN DATA REGARDING THE PERSONAL
3 RESPONSIBILITY AND WORK OPPORTUNITY RECONCILIATION ACT OF 1996 AND
4 TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) AND TO MAKE SUCH
5 INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC; TO REQUIRE THE STENNIS
6 INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, WITH THE
7 COOPERATION OF THE URBAN RESEARCH CENTER AT JACKSON STATE
8 UNIVERSITY, TO CONDUCT A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF THE IMPLEMENTATION
9 OF TANF AND RELATED WELFARE REFORMS; TO PRESCRIBE THE PARAMETERS
10 OF THE STUDY; TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
11 SERVICES TO COOPERATE IN ANY STUDY FUNDED BY A STATE, COUNTY OR
12 MUNICIPAL BODY AND CONDUCTED BY AN INDEPENDENT EXPERT WHICH
13 CONCERNS THE IMPACT UPON MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT ALIENS OF THE DENIAL
14 OR TERMINATION OF ASSISTANCE UNDER CERTAIN FEDERAL WELFARE
15 PROGRAMS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

17 SECTION 1. (1) The Mississippi Department of Human Services
18 shall collect and report upon all data in connection with
19 federally funded or assisted welfare programs as federal law may
20 require, including, but not limited to, Section 411 of the
21 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of
22 1996 and its implementing regulations and any amendments thereto
23 as may from time to time be enacted. Such data shall be made
24 available to the public within one (1) week after it has been sent
25 to the United States Department of Health and Human Services at
26 each regional office of the Mississippi Department of Human
27 Services.

28 (2) On the same schedule as the data collection required by
29 federal law and subsection (1) of this section, the Mississippi
30 Department of Human Services shall collect and report additional
31 information with respect to the Temporary Assistance for Needy
32 Families (TANF) program, as follows:

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34 (a) With respect to denials of applications for
35 benefits, all of the information about the family as required
36 under federal law, plus the specific reason or reasons for denial
37 of the application.

38 (b) With respect to all terminations of benefits, all
39 of the information as required under federal law, plus the
40 specific reason or reasons for the termination or sanction.

41 (3) The Mississippi Department of Human Services shall
42 collect all of the data as set forth in subsections (1) and (2) of
43 this section on all cash assistance benefits provided to families
44 which are not funded from the TANF program federal block grant or
45 are not required otherwise to be included in the data collection
46 and reporting provided for in subsections (1) and (2) of this
47 section, and shall report such information on the same schedule as
48 is required for the information collected in subsections (1) and
49 (2) of this section.

50 (4) Reports made under this section shall be considered
51 public records and shall be made available promptly to the public
52 upon request at the end of each fiscal year at a reasonable cost
53 directly related to the cost of copying and mailing the reports.
54 The data underlying the reports shall be made available to
55 academic institutions and public policy organizations involved in
56 the study of welfare issues or programs after any reductions made
57 to conform with applicable privacy laws. The data shall be
58 provided by the Mississippi Department of Human Services at a
59 reasonable cost directly related to the cost of copying and
60 mailing the data.

61 SECTION 2. (1) The Stennis Institute of Government at
62 Mississippi State University, with the cooperation of the Urban
63 Research Center at Jackson State University, shall conduct a
64 longitudinal study of the implementation of TANF and related
65 welfare reforms. The research group shall consist of experienced
66 researchers in welfare policy, social science and other relevant
67 fields. The study shall select subgroups representing important
68 sectors of the assistance population, including type of area of
69 residence (city, suburban, small town, rural, region), level of

70 education, literacy, work experience, number of adults in the
71 home, number and age of children in the home, teen parentage,
72 English proficiency, where relevant, and other such subgroups
73 chosen by the institution. For each subgroup, the study shall
74 assemble a statistically valid sample of TANF cases enrolled
75 before October 1, 1998. The study shall continue until December
76 31, 2004. The Mississippi Department of Human Services, the
77 Stennis Institute of Government and the Urban Research Center
78 shall obtain permission to conduct the study from the subjects of
79 the study and guarantee their privacy according to applicable
80 privacy laws. To facilitate this permission, the study may be
81 designed to refer to subjects by pseudonyms or codes and, in any
82 event, shall guarantee anonymity to the subjects with limited
83 access by outsiders to the data (other than identities) generated
84 by the study. The Stennis Institute of Government and the Urban
85 Research Center shall report the interim findings of the study,
86 with respect to each subgroup, to the Legislature by August 31 of
87 each year, beginning August 31, 2000, and shall report the final
88 findings with respect to each subgroup by March 31, 2005. The
89 reports shall be available to the public upon request.

90 (2) The Stennis Institute of Government and the Urban
91 Research Center shall devise the study and identify the factors to
92 be studied by not later than August 31, 1999. The study shall
93 include, but not be limited to, the following:

94 (a) The study shall include demographic breakdowns
95 including, but not limited to, race, gender, age and number of
96 children in the household.

97 (b) The subjects of the study shall be followed after
98 denial or termination of assistance, to the extent feasible. The
99 evaluator shall attempt to maintain personal contact with the
100 subjects of the study, and employ such methods as meetings,
101 telephone contacts, written surveys and computer matches with
102 other data bases to accomplish this purpose. The intent of this

103 feature of the study is to discover the paths people take after
104 leaving welfare and the patterns of return to welfare, including
105 the factors that may influence these paths and patterns.

106 (c) The study shall examine the influence of various
107 employability, education and training programs upon employment,
108 earnings, job tenure and cycling between welfare and work
109 (repeated application for welfare between periods of employment).

110 (d) The study shall examine the influence of various
111 supportive services such as child care (including type and cost),
112 transportation and payment of initial employment expenses upon
113 employment, earnings, job tenure and cycling between welfare and
114 work.

115 (e) The study shall examine the influence of government
116 benefits that are authorized by TANF to be received by subjects
117 after they have been employed upon employment, earnings, job
118 tenure and cycling between welfare and work.

119 (f) The study shall examine the frequency of unplanned
120 occurrences in subjects' lives, such as illness or injury, family
121 members' illness or injury, car breakdown, strikes, natural
122 disasters, evictions, loss of other sources of income, domestic
123 violence and crime, and their impact upon employment, earnings,
124 job tenure and cycling between welfare and work.

125 (g) The study shall examine the wages and other
126 compensation, including health benefits and what they cost the
127 employee, received by subjects who obtain employment, the type and
128 characteristics of jobs, the hours and time of day of work, union
129 status and the relationships of such factors to earnings, job
130 tenure and cycling between welfare and work.

131 (h) The study shall examine the reasons for subjects'
132 job loss, the availability of unemployment insurance, the reasons
133 for a subject's return to welfare, programs or services utilized
134 by subjects in the search for another job, the characteristics of
135 the subjects' next job and the relationships of these factors to

136 negative ripple effects in these systems of welfare policies,
137 systems and procedures.

138 (3) The study authorized by this section shall be funded by
139 the Department of Human Services from the TANF program federal
140 block grant.

141 SECTION 3. The Department of Human Services shall cooperate
142 in any study funded by a federal, state, county or municipal body,
143 and conducted by an independent expert, concerning the impact upon
144 Mississippi residents of the denial or termination of assistance
145 under the Food Stamps, TANF, Medicaid and Title XX social services
146 programs pursuant to the changes enacted in the federal Personal
147 Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.
148 The purpose of such a study must be to examine the immediate and
149 long-term effects on this population and on the state of the
150 denial or termination of these forms of assistance, including the
151 impact on the individuals, the alternate means they find to obtain
152 support and care, and the impact on state and local spending and
153 human services delivery systems. Such a study shall select a
154 statistically valid sample of persons denied or terminated from
155 each type of benefit and attempt to track them at least until July
156 31, 2000. Any reports from studies conducted with the cooperation
157 of the Mississippi Department of Human Services shall be made
158 available to the Legislature upon request, and a final report
159 shall be submitted upon completion. These reports shall be
160 available to the public upon request.

161 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from
162 and after its passage.