

By: Senator(s) Ferris

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2618
(As Sent to Governor)

1
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT AND
3 IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES IN
4 MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE FOR A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND
5 RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 2000 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE;
6 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds that:

9 (a) Studies show that children who experience quality
10 comprehensive early childhood services have higher academic and
11 social ratings by their kindergarten teachers and better
12 kindergarten attendance than children who do not;

13 (b) Participation in quality comprehensive early
14 childhood services helps children develop social and pre-academic
15 skills that will help them succeed in kindergarten and throughout
16 their educational experiences;

17 (c) Other southeastern states have implemented
18 pre-kindergarten programs similar to the Georgia Pre-Kindergarten
19 Program for four-year-old children, emphasizing growth in language
20 and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development,
21 and personal and social competence.

22 (2) There is hereby created a Task Force to Study the
23 Development and Implementation of Comprehensive Early Childhood
24 Services in Mississippi. The task force shall make a report of
25 its findings and recommendations to the Legislature at least
26 thirty (30) days before the beginning of the 2000 Regular Session
27 of the Legislature for implementation in the 2000-2001 school
28 year.

29 (3) The task force shall be composed of twenty-five (25)
30 members as follows:

31 (a) The Chairmen of the Senate Education and
32 Appropriations Committees;

33 (b) Two (2) members of the Senate appointed by the
34 President of the Senate, or their designees;

35 (c) The Chairmen of the House Education and
36 Appropriations Committees;

37 (d) Two (2) members of the House of Representatives
38 appointed by the Speaker of the House, or their designees;

39 (e) A representative of the Governor;

40 (f) The State Superintendent of Education;

41 (g) The Executive Director of the Department of Health,
42 the state child care licensing agency;

43 (h) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
44 Services, the state Child Care Development Fund agency;

45 (i) Representatives of the early childhood profession:

46 (i) A Head Start director elected by the
47 Mississippi Head Start Association;

48 (ii) A representative from a regulated family
49 child care home network appointed by the Speaker of the House;

50 (iii) A representative from a licensed child care
51 center appointed by the President of the Senate;

52 (iv) A representative from a public school
53 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

54 (v) A representative from a private school
55 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the President of the Senate;

56 (vi) A representative from a half-day church
57 sponsored pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the
58 House;

59 (vii) A representative from a university or
60 college early childhood teacher preparation program appointed by
61 the President of the Senate;

62 (viii) A representative of a tribal early
63 childhood program appointed by the Speaker of the House;
64 (ix) A representative of an early childhood
65 professional organization appointed by the President of the
66 Senate; and
67 (x) A representative of an advocacy organization
68 appointed by the Speaker of the House;
69 (j) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the
70 President of the Senate;
71 (k) A parent of a preschool-age child with special
72 needs appointed by the Speaker of the House; and
73 (l) A representative of the cooperative extension
74 services appointed by the Speaker of the House.
75 (4) In the event the Chairman of the Senate or House
76 Education or Appropriations Committees is unable to attend any
77 meeting of the task force, the vice-chairman of the respective
78 committee shall be authorized to attend and vote at such meeting.
79 Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after passage
80 of this act, and, within fifteen (15) days thereafter on a day to
81 be designated jointly by the President of the Senate, the Speaker
82 of the House and the State Superintendent of Education, the task
83 force shall meet. The Chairman of the Senate Education Committee
84 shall appoint a chairman of the task force from its membership,
85 and the Chairman of the House Education Committee shall appoint a
86 vice-chairman of the task force from its membership. The
87 vice-chairman also shall serve as secretary and shall be
88 responsible for keeping all records of the task force. A majority
89 of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum. In
90 the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative
91 vote of a majority of the task force shall be required. All
92 members shall be notified in writing of all meetings, such notices
93 to be mailed at least five (5) days before the date on which a
94 meeting is to be held.

95 (5) Members of the task force who are not legislators shall
96 be compensated at the per diem rate authorized by Section 25-3-69,
97 Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be reimbursed in accordance
98 with Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, for mileage and
99 actual expense incurred in the performance of their duties. Any
100 member who is also a state employee shall not be eligible to
101 receive per diem compensation. No task force member may incur per
102 diem, travel or other expenses unless previously authorized by
103 vote, at a meeting of the task force, which action shall be
104 recorded in the official minutes of the meeting. Legislative
105 members of the committee shall be paid from the contingent expense
106 funds of their respective houses in the same amounts as provided
107 for committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session;
108 however, no per diem or expense for attending meetings of the task
109 force will be paid while the Legislature is in session.
110 Non-legislative members shall be paid from any funds made
111 available to the task force for that purpose.

112 (6) The task force may utilize clerical and legal staff
113 employed by the State Department of Education, the Office of the
114 Governor, the Legislature and any other staff assistance made
115 available to it.

116 (7) Funding for the task force may be provided from any
117 funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature to the State
118 Department of Education for that purpose.

119 (8) Upon presentation of its report to the 2000 Regular
120 Session, the task force shall be dissolved.

121 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
122 and after its passage.