

By: Senator(s) Tollison (By Request)

To: Public Health and Welfare

SENATE BILL NO. 2897  
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A SPECIAL FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY TO BE  
2 DESIGNATED AS THE "MISSISSIPPI REDUCING OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES  
3 INCENTIVE GRANT FUND" FOR PROVIDING FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO  
4 COUNTIES TO REDUCE THEIR OUT-OF-WEDLOCK BIRTH RATES; TO PROVIDE  
5 THAT THE FUND SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT  
6 OF HUMAN SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created in the State  
9 Treasury a special fund to be known as the Mississippi Reducing  
10 Out-Of-Wedlock Pregnancies Incentive Grant Fund into which shall  
11 be deposited the federal funds available for bonuses for the  
12 reduction in out-of-wedlock births awarded under the federal  
13 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of  
14 1996 (Public Law 104-193) and such other money as the Legislature  
15 may provide by appropriation. The money in the fund shall be used  
16 for the purpose of providing financial incentives to counties to  
17 reduce their out-of-wedlock birth rates as required by federal  
18 welfare reform legislation. The fund shall be administered by the  
19 Department of Human Services. Unexpended amounts remaining in the  
20 fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the State  
21 General Fund, and any interest earned on amounts in the fund shall  
22 be deposited to the credit of the fund; provided that any  
23 unexpended amounts remaining in the fund on December 31, 2003,  
24 shall lapse into the State General Fund.

25 (2) The Department of Human Services shall make annual  
26 awards from the fund to the top five (5) counties with the  
27 greatest reduction in out-of-wedlock births without an increase in  
28 abortions in each of the following categories:

29           (a) One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000.00) in  
30 counties which had fewer than two hundred fifty (250) total live  
31 births;

32           (b) Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$250,000.00) in  
33 counties which had between two hundred fifty (250) and five  
34 hundred (500) total live births;

35           (c) Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000.00) in  
36 counties which had more than five hundred (500) total live births.

37           (3) Determination of the recipient counties will be based on  
38 an average of the previous two (2) years' out-of-wedlock birth  
39 rates compared to the previous two-year average, and the number of  
40 abortions performed on county residents compared to the number for  
41 calendar year 1998 as reported by the State Department of Health.

42           In order to qualify for the award funds, the reduction in the  
43 out-of-wedlock birth rate shall be at least three percent (3%).

44           (4) In order to be considered for an incentive award, the  
45 county board of supervisors shall appoint an advisory committee  
46 the members of which shall include, but not be limited to, the  
47 director of the county health department, the director of the  
48 county department of human services, the superintendent of each  
49 public school district in the county, the director of the  
50 community action agency in the county, the director of the county  
51 primary health care association, and the county agent for the  
52 Mississippi Cooperative Extension Service, or the designees of any  
53 of these persons, which shall develop a plan for the county and  
54 submit the plan to the Department of Human Services by October 1,  
55 1999, and by October 1 of each subsequent year.

56           (5) Each county receiving an incentive award will be subject  
57 to the following requirements:

58           (a) The county must use the incentive award for some  
59 type of youth enrichment, such as, but not limited to, continuing  
60 the implementation of the plan that reduced out-of-wedlock  
61 pregnancies, education-related projects, recreational facilities,

62 or a summer work program; and

63 (b) The county must submit a report to the Department  
64 of Human Services on the methods used to achieve the reduction in  
65 out-of-wedlock births, and submit a separate report to the  
66 department explaining how the incentive award was spent.

67 (6) If the fund is not adequate to make the distributions  
68 presented under this section, the department may award funds to  
69 counties on a reduced pro-rata basis.

70 (7) Funds shall be distributed each year following the  
71 release of the vital statistics report of the Mississippi State  
72 Department of Health. The first disbursement from the fund shall  
73 be made after such report is released which shows the statistics  
74 for calendar year 2000.

75 (8) This section shall stand repealed from and after June  
76 30, 2003.

77 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
78 and after July 1, 1999.