

By: Scott (17th), Thomas

To: Education;  
AppropriationsCOMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 197

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT  
2 A FULL DAY VOLUNTARY PREKINDERGARTEN EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR  
3 FOUR-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN IN CERTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH SERVICES  
4 PROVIDED THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, HEAD START OR  
5 OTHER CHILD DAY CARE PROGRAMS; TO ESTABLISH CERTAIN CRITERIA FOR  
6 THE PROGRAM; TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH  
7 AN APPLICATION PROCESS FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS DESIRING TO  
8 PARTICIPATE IN THE PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF  
9 EDUCATION TO USE AVAILABLE FUNDING FOR GRANTS TO PARTICIPATING  
10 SCHOOL DISTRICTS; TO REQUIRE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO  
11 RECOMMEND TO THE LEGISLATURE WHETHER OR NOT THE PROGRAM SHOULD BE  
12 PERMANENTLY ESTABLISHED; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

14 SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section, the term  
15 "four-year-old" means any child who is four (4) years of age on or  
16 before September 1.

17 (2) To ensure that all four-year-olds have access to quality  
18 educational services, the Legislature finds and declares the  
19 following:

20 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their  
21 young preschool children.

22 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist parents in  
23 their role as the primary caregivers and educators by providing  
24 services for a full-day prekindergarten program that addresses  
25 instructional, social and emotional needs for four-year-old  
26 children.

27 (3) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the  
28 Department of Human Services, shall develop and implement a  
29 voluntary program to provide services for a full-day  
30 prekindergarten program that addresses the cognitive, social and  
31 emotional needs of four-year-old children, subject to the  
32 following conditions and provisions:

33 (a) Participation in the program must be voluntary on  
34 the part of the four-year-old child's parent, guardian or  
35 custodian.

36 (b) The State Board of Education, the Department of  
37 Human Services, the State Board of Health, the Mississippi Head  
38 Start Association and the public and private day care centers  
39 jointly shall develop criteria for the following: (i) enrollment  
40 of four-year-old children who have predicted significant readiness  
41 deficiencies; (ii) qualifications of personnel employed to serve  
42 the children; (iii) teacher-student ratio; (iv) health and safety  
43 standards; (v) hours of operation of the programs; and (vi)  
44 provisions for the transportation of the four-year-old children.

45 (c) The core curriculum of all four-year-old programs  
46 must meet or exceed the State Department of Education's  
47 prekindergarten curriculum benchmarks. The curriculum must  
48 encompass language development, mathematics language development,

49 math concepts, social and emotional development and physical  
50 development (fine, gross, sensory motor development).

51 (d) To ensure coordination, participating school  
52 districts shall review available educational resources, programs  
53 and services in order to avoid duplication of public services  
54 available through Head Start or public or private day care  
55 centers.

56 (e) The State Board of Education shall determine a  
57 process for interested school districts to apply for grant funds  
58 in order to participate in the four-year-old program. Subject to  
59 the availability of funding, beginning in fiscal year 2001, the  
60 State Board of Education shall award grants for at least one (1)  
61 program in each Mississippi congressional district, subject to a  
62 maximum of twenty-five (25) programs throughout the state, and in  
63 subsequent years, may award additional program grants subject to  
64 the availability of funds. These programs shall be awarded to  
65 targeted school districts that are most in need of an  
66 instructional program for four-year-old children who have  
67 predicted significant readiness deficiencies. The State  
68 Department of Education annually will determine a cost-per-child  
69 rate that shall be used in funding a targeted program and shall  
70 collaborate with the Department of Human Services in the  
71 determination of fair market rates for subsidized child care. The  
72 targeted districts will be responsible for blending services for  
73 children to avoid duplication in the areas of transportation,  
74 personnel, training of personnel, facilities and child nutrition.  
75 Such services may be provided by the participating school  
76 district in the public schools, the local Head Start facility or a  
77 public or private day care center.

78 (4) The State Department of Education may use any available  
79 funds, public or private, for the support and maintenance of  
80 full-day prekindergarten education programs authorized under this  
81 section.

82 (5) The State Board of Education shall report to the  
83 Legislature on July 1, 2001, and annually thereafter, on the  
84 desirability of expanding and permanently establishing the  
85 program.

86 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
87 and after July 1, 2000.