

By: Harden

To: Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2594

1 AN ACT TO CREATE AND EMPOWER THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON  
2 HUMAN RIGHTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

4 SECTION 1. (1) (a) There is hereby created the Mississippi  
5 Commission on Human Rights. The commission shall be composed of  
6 thirteen (13) members to be appointed as follows:

7 (i) Five (5) members shall be appointed by the  
8 Governor.

9 (ii) Five (5) members shall be appointed by the  
10 Lieutenant Governor.

11 (iii) Three (3) members shall be appointed by the  
12 Attorney General.

13 (b) The members of the commission shall be women and  
14 men of recognized ability and achievement who are representative  
15 of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the population of this  
16 state. Members shall serve for terms of four (4) years each, and  
17 no member may serve for more than two (2) consecutive terms. All  
18 vacancies shall be filled by the appointing authority for the  
19 unexpired term.

20 (c) The commission shall elect a chairman, vice  
21 chairman and secretary from among its members for terms of two (2)

22 years each, and any member is eligible for successive elections to  
23 office.

24 (d) A quorum for transacting business shall be a  
25 majority of the members of the commission.

26 (e) Members of the commission shall be reimbursed for  
27 expenses as provided in Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972,  
28 and shall receive per diem as provided in Section 25-3-69,  
29 Mississippi Code of 1972.

30 (f) The Lieutenant Governor and the Attorney General  
31 shall notify the Governor after they have made their appointments,  
32 and the Governor shall then designate a place and time for the  
33 initial organizational meeting of the commission.

34 (2) The commission shall have the powers and authority  
35 necessary to carry out the duties imposed upon it by this act,  
36 including, but not limited to, the following:

37 (a) To employ such administrative, technical and other  
38 personnel as may be necessary for the performance of its powers  
39 and duties;

40 (b) To hold hearings, make and sign any agreements and  
41 do or perform any acts which may be necessary, desirable or proper  
42 to carry out the purposes of this act;

43 (c) To cooperate with any state agency, authority,  
44 board, commission, department or institution to facilitate its  
45 implementation of the powers and duties granted to the commission  
46 in this act; and each such state agency, authority, board,  
47 commission, department or institution shall cooperate with the  
48 commission in the performance of its duties;

49 (d) To appoint advisers or advisory committees from  
50 time to time when the commission determines that the experience or  
51 expertise of such advisers or advisory committees is needed for  
52 projects of the commission; and

53           (e) To apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts and  
54 services from the state, the government of the United States or  
55 any of its agencies, or any other public or private source, for  
56 the purpose of defraying clerical and administrative costs as may  
57 be necessary in carrying out its duties under this act.

58           (3) (a) The commission shall study the following:

59                   (i) Educational and employment problems, needs and  
60 opportunities;

61                   (ii) State laws in regard to the civil and  
62 political rights of women, including pensions, tax requirements,  
63 property rights, marriage and dissolution of marriage provisions,  
64 and similar matters;

65                   (iii) The effect of social attitudes and pressures  
66 and economic considerations in shaping public policy; and

67                   (iv) Any laws, practices or conditions which  
68 impose special limitations or burdens upon women, minorities or  
69 society, or which limit or tend to limit available opportunities.

70           (b) The commission shall act as an information center  
71 on the status of human rights, educational, employment and other  
72 related needs.

73           (c) The commission shall recommend, develop, prepare or  
74 coordinate materials, projects or other activities and shall give  
75 technical and consultative advice to public or private groups or  
76 persons concerned with any of the following:

77                   (i) Preventing or minimizing problems brought  
78 about by the changing roles and responsibilities; and

79                   (ii) Developing programs to encourage and enable  
80 all persons to be fully contributing members of society.

81           (d) The commission may encourage organizations and  
82 other groups to institute local self-help activities designed to  
83 meet educational, employment and related needs.

84           (4) The commission shall make a report to the Legislature at  
85 the close of each fiscal year on its activities, findings and  
86 recommendations.

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