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To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2685

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES INTERAGENCY
2 COORDINATING COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP AND
3 ORGANIZATION OF THE COUNCIL; TO DEFINE THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE
4 COUNCIL; TO ESTABLISH AN INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE
5 INTERAGENCY COUNCIL FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD SERVICES; TO PROVIDE FOR
6 THE MEMBERSHIP, ORGANIZATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ADVISORY
7 COMMITTEE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 SECTION 1. (1) As used in this act, the term "preschool
10 children" means any children who have not entered kindergarten.

11 (2) To ensure that all children have access to quality early
12 childhood education and development services, the Legislature
13 hereby finds and declares that:

14 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their
15 young preschool children;

16 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist and educate
17 parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of
18 young preschool children; and

19 (c) There is a need to explore innovative approaches
20 and strategies for aiding parents and families in the education
21 and development of young preschool children.

22 SECTION 2. (1) The Early Childhood Services Interagency
23 Coordinating Council is hereby created to ensure coordination
24 among the various agencies and programs serving preschool children
25 in order to support school district's efforts to achieve the goal
26 of readiness to start school, to facilitate communication,
27 cooperation and maximum use of resources and to promote high
28 standards for all programs serving preschool children and their

29 families in Mississippi.

30 (2) The membership of the Early Childhood Services
31 Interagency Coordinating Council shall be as follows:

32 (a) The State Superintendent of Education;

33 (b) The Executive Director of the Department of Health;

34 (c) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
35 Services;

36 (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi
37 Department of Mental Health;

38 (e) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid,
39 Office of the Governor;

40 (f) The Executive Director of the State Department of
41 Rehabilitation Services;

42 (g) The Commissioner of Higher Education;

43 (h) The Executive Director of the State Board for
44 Community and Junior Colleges; and

45 (i) The Executive Director of Mississippi Educational
46 Television.

47 (3) The council shall meet upon call of the Governor not
48 later than August 1, 2000, and shall organize for business by
49 selecting a chairman who shall serve for a one-year term and may
50 be selected for subsequent terms. The council shall adopt
51 internal organizational procedures necessary for efficient
52 operation of the council. Council procedures shall include duties
53 of officers, a process for selecting officers, quorum requirements
54 for conducting business and policies for any council staff. Each
55 member of the council shall designate necessary staff of their
56 departments to assist the council in performing its duties and
57 responsibilities. The council shall meet and conduct business at
58 least quarterly. Meetings of the council shall be open to the
59 public and opportunity for public comment shall be made available
60 at each such meeting. The chairman of the council shall notify
61 all persons who request such notice as to the date, time and place
62 of each meeting.

63 (4) Members of the council shall receive no compensation for
64 their services, but shall be reimbursed for travel and other
65 expenses actually incurred in the performance of their official

66 duties. Such reimbursement shall be paid in accordance with the
67 provisions of Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall
68 be approved by the chairman of the council.

69 (5) The Early Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating
70 Council shall perform each of the following duties:

71 (a) Serve as interagency coordinating council for the
72 various agencies, public and private programs serving preschool
73 children and their families in the State of Mississippi;

74 (b) Advise the State Board of Health, the State Board
75 of Education, the Department of Human Services, Mississippi
76 Department of Mental Health, Division of Medicaid, Department of
77 Rehabilitation Services and any other appropriate agency,
78 concerning standards, rules, rule revisions, agency guidelines and
79 administration affecting child care facilities, pre-kindergarten
80 programs, family training programs and other programs and services
81 for preschool children and families;

82 (c) Collect, compile and distribute data relating to
83 all programs and services for preschool children and families,
84 including, but not limited to, an inventory of the programs and
85 services available in each county of the state; and identify and
86 make recommendations with regard to program areas for which an
87 unfulfilled need exists within the state for accurate and
88 accessible information;

89 (d) Review and analyze spending priorities for each
90 state agency which utilizes state or federal funds to administer
91 or provide programs and services for preschool children and make
92 recommendations thereon to the Legislative Budget Committee and
93 the Governor;

94 (e) Publish annually, on or before November 1, a
95 comprehensive report on the status of all programs and services
96 for preschool children in Mississippi and distribute the report to
97 the Governor, the Legislature, local school districts and make the
98 report available to the general public, using the following

99 criteria:

- 100 (i) Program name and location;
- 101 (ii) Dates of operation;
- 102 (iii) Service provided;
- 103 (iv) Target population and number served;
- 104 (v) Eligibility requirement;
- 105 (vi) Funding source;
- 106 (vii) Amount of funding per unit;
- 107 (viii) Annual cost;
- 108 (ix) Evaluation type and results; and
- 109 (x) The state agency administering the program.

110 (f) Receive and consider recommendations of the
111 Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood Services
112 established in Section 3; and

113 (g) Apply for, receive and administer funds for
114 administration, research, pilot, planning and evaluation of all
115 programs serving preschool children and their families.

116 SECTION 3. (1) The Interagency Advisory Committee for Early
117 Childhood Services is hereby created to develop and make
118 recommendations to the Early Childhood Services Interagency
119 Coordinating Council established under Section 2 of this act as
120 deemed necessary to implement the council's responsibilities
121 relating to all programs serving preschool children and their
122 families in Mississippi.

123 (2) The membership of the Interagency Advisory Committee for
124 Early Childhood Services shall be as follows:

125 (a) The Chairmen of the Senate Education, Public Health
126 and Welfare and Appropriations Committees, or their designees;

127 (b) The Chairmen of the House Education, Public Health
128 and Welfare and Appropriations Committees, or their designees;

129 (c) A representative of the Governor;

130 (d) A representative of the State Department of
131 Education;

- 132 (e) A representative of the State Department of Health;
- 133 (f) A representative of the Department of Human
134 Services;
- 135 (g) A representative of the Mississippi Department of
136 Mental Health;
- 137 (h) A representative of the State Department of
138 Rehabilitation Services;
- 139 (i) The following representatives of the early
140 childhood profession:
- 141 (i) The President of the Mississippi Head Start
142 Association;
- 143 (ii) A representative from a regulated family
144 child care home network appointed by the Governor;
- 145 (iii) A representative from a licensed child care
146 center appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 147 (iv) A representative from a public school
148 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 149 (v) A representative from a private school
150 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Governor;
- 151 (vi) A representative from a half-day church
152 sponsored pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the
153 House;
- 154 (vii) A representative from a university or
155 college early childhood program appointed by the President of the
156 Senate;
- 157 (viii) A representative of a tribal early
158 childhood program appointed by the Governor;
- 159 (ix) A representative of an early childhood
160 professional organization appointed by the President of the
161 Senate;
- 162 (x) A representative of an advocacy organization
163 appointed by the Speaker of the House; and
- 164 (xi) A representative of a community/junior

- 165 college early childhood program appointed by the Governor;
- 166 (j) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the
167 Governor;
- 168 (k) A parent of a preschool-age child with special
169 needs appointed by the Speaker of the House;
- 170 (l) A representative of the cooperative extension
171 services appointed by the President of the Senate;
- 172 (m) A physician who is a member of the Mississippi
173 Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, appointed by the
174 Director of the University Medical Center;
- 175 (n) The Director of the Mississippi Public Education
176 Forum, or his designee; and
- 177 (o) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Economic
178 Council, or his designee.

179 To the extent possible, any representative of a state agency
180 designated to serve on the Interagency Advisory Committee shall be
181 the same individual designated to assist the Interagency
182 Coordinating Council in performing its duties and
183 responsibilities.

184 (3) The advisory committee shall meet upon call of the Early
185 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council not later than
186 August 1, 2000, and the council shall appoint a chairman who shall
187 serve for a one-year term and may be reappointed for subsequent
188 terms. The advisory committee shall adopt internal organizational
189 procedures necessary for efficient operation of the advisory
190 committee and may establish subcommittees for conducting specific
191 programs and activities. Advisory committee procedures shall
192 include duties of officers, a process for selecting officers,
193 duties of subcommittees, quorum requirements for conducting
194 business and policies for any staff. The members of the Early
195 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council shall
196 designate necessary staff of their departments to assist the
197 advisory committee in performing its duties and responsibilities.

198 The advisory committee shall meet and conduct business at least
199 quarterly. Quarterly meetings of the advisory committee shall be
200 open to the public and opportunity for public comment shall be
201 made available at each such meeting. The staff of the advisory
202 committee shall notify all persons who request such notice as to
203 the date, time and place of each quarterly meeting.

204 (4) Nonlegislative members of the advisory committee shall
205 receive no compensation for their services, but shall be
206 reimbursed for travel and other expenses actually incurred in the
207 performance of their official duties. Such reimbursement shall be
208 paid in accordance with the provisions of Section 25-3-41,
209 Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be approved by the chairman of
210 the advisory committee. Legislative members of the advisory
211 committee shall receive the same per diem and expense
212 reimbursement as is authorized for interim committee meetings to
213 be paid from the contingent expense funds of the respective
214 chamber.

215 (5) The Interagency Advisory Committee for Early Childhood
216 Services, in addition to responsibilities assigned by the Early
217 Childhood Services Interagency Coordinating Council, shall perform
218 each of the following duties:

219 (a) Assist in the implementation of the study conducted
220 by the Task Force on the Development and Implementation of
221 Comprehensive Early Childhood Services in Mississippi established
222 under Senate Bill No. 2618 (1999 Regular Session);

223 (b) Identify services to children which impact early
224 childhood development and education;

225 (c) Identify and recommend methods to facilitate
226 interagency coordination of service programs for preschool
227 children;

228 (d) Serve as a forum for information exchange regarding
229 recommendations and priorities in early childhood development and
230 education; and

231 (e) Advise and make recommendations to the interagency
232 council as deemed necessary to effectuate the council's
233 responsibilities.

234 SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from
235 and after July 1, 2000.