HOUSE BILL NO. 427

AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF REHABILITATION TO
ESTABLISH AND OPERATE A TOUCH-TONE NATIONAL JOB SEARCH SYSTEM, IN
CONJUNCTION WITH THE AMERICA'S JOBLINE NETWORK, IN ORDER TO
PROVIDE ADDITIONAL JOB-SEARCH ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WHO ARE
DISABLED OR WHO RESIDE IN A COUNTY THAT DOES NOT HAVE AN
EMPLOYMENT OFFICE; TO AUTHORIZE THE DEPARTMENT TO CONTRACT WITH
CERTAIN ORGANIZATIONS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IN ESTABLISHING THE
SYSTEM; TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-33-157 AND 71-5-125, MISSISSIPPI CODE
OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (a) The Department of Rehabilitation Services
shall establish and operate a touch-tone telephone national job
search system, in conjunction with the America's Jobline Network,
in order to provide additional job-search assistance to those
persons with a disability or who reside in a county that does not
have an employment office.

(b) The department may contract with the National Federation
of the Blind for financial assistance in establishing the system.

(c) The Mississippi Employment Security Commission shall
supply the department with lists of available jobs.

SECTION 2. Section 37-33-157, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:

37-33-157. The Department of Rehabilitation Services shall
provide the rehabilitation services authorized by law and by the
rules, regulations and policies of the board to every individual
determined to be eligible therefor, and in carrying out the
purposes of this chapter the department is authorized, when
consistent with the rules, regulations and policies of the State
Board of Rehabilitation Services:
(a) To expend funds received either by appropriation or
directly from federal or private sources;

(b) To cooperate with other departments, agencies and
institutions, both public and private, in providing the services
authorized by this chapter to disabled individuals, in studying
the problems involved therein, and in establishing, developing and
providing in conformity with the purposes of this chapter, such
programs, facilities and services as may be necessary or
desirable;

(c) To enter into reciprocal agreements with other
states to provide for the services authorized by this chapter to
residents of the states concerned;

(d) To conduct research and compile statistics relating
to the provision of services to or the need of services by
disabled individuals;

(e) To enter into contractual arrangements with the
federal government and with other authorized public agencies or
persons for performance of services related to rehabilitation;

(f) To contract with schools, hospitals and other
agencies, and with doctors, optometrists, nurses, technicians and
other persons, for training, physical restoration, transportation
and other rehabilitation services;

(g) To take such action as may be necessary to enable
the department to apply for, accept and receive for the state and
its residents the full benefits available under the federal
Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and any amendments thereto, and
under any other federal legislation or program having as its
purpose the providing of, improvement or extension of, vocational
rehabilitation services.

(h) To establish an Office on the Deaf and Hard of
Hearing to provide services and activities authorized under
Section 37-33-171.
(i) To establish and operate a touch-tone telephone national job search system, in conjunction with the America's Jobline Network, in accordance with Section 1 of House Bill No.____, 2001 Regular Session.

SECTION 3. Section 71-5-125, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

71-5-125. The commission, with the advice and aid of its advisory councils, shall take all appropriate steps to reduce and prevent unemployment, including, but not limited to, supplying the Department of Rehabilitation Services with lists of available jobs as provided under Section 1 of House Bill No.____, 2001 Regular Session; to encourage and assist in the adoption of practical methods of vocational training, retraining, and vocational guidance; to investigate, recommend, advise, and assist in the establishment and operation, by municipalities, counties, school districts, and the state, of reserves for public works to be used in times of business depression and unemployment; to promote the re-employment of unemployed workers throughout the state in every other way that may be feasible; and to these ends to carry on and publish the results of investigation and research studies.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.