HOUSE BILL NO. 634

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 43-15-17, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES SHALL NOT MAKE FOSTER CARE PAYMENTS TO ANY FOSTER PARENTS FOR THE SUPPORT OF MORE THAN TWO CHILDREN UNLESS THE CHILDREN ARE SIBLINGS; TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE FOSTER CARE MONTHLY PAYMENTS FOR THE SUPPORT OF CHILDREN WITH DEBILITATING DISEASES BY 25% OF THE CURRENT AMOUNT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 43-15-17, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

43-15-17. (1) The State Department of Human Services is authorized to make such payments as may be appropriate for supportive services to facilitate either the return of children to their natural parents or their adoption, depending upon and contingent upon the availability of the State Department of Human Services' securing or having sufficient funds to render this supportive service. Upon court order, the parent(s) shall be responsible for reimbursing the department for any foster care payments made on behalf of his or her child, based upon financial ability to pay, until such time as there is a termination of parental rights regarding the child, or the child is adopted.

(2) For those children placed in foster care by the state or county departments of human services, the department shall make monthly payments for the support of these children's room and board, clothing, allowance and personal needs. However, the department shall not make foster care payments to any foster parents for the support of more than two (2) children unless the children are siblings. From and after July 1, 1998, and subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor,
the department's foster care and therapeutic care monthly payment schedule in effect prior to that date shall be increased by One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) per month, with that minimum payment not to preclude the department from increasing payments in subsequent years as funds become available. From and after July 1, 1998, in order for foster parents to receive such monthly payments authorized under this subsection (2), the department shall require foster care placements to be licensed as foster care homes and shall require prospective foster parents to satisfactorily complete an appropriate training program which emphasizes the goal of the foster care program to provide stable foster placement until a permanency outcome is achieved. From and after July 1, 2001, the amount of the foster care and therapeutic care monthly payments for the support of children with debilitating diseases shall be increased by twenty-five percent (25%) above the amount that was in effect before that date.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.