SENATE BILL NO. 2235

AN ACT TO CREATE AND EMPOWER THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

(c) The commission shall elect a chairman, vice chairman and secretary from among its members for terms of two (2) years each, and any member is eligible for successive elections to office.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(i) Women's educational and employment problems,
(ii) State laws in regard to the civil and political rights of women, including pensions, tax requirements, property rights, marriage and dissolution of marriage provisions, and similar matters;

(iii) The effect of social attitudes and pressures and economic considerations in shaping the roles to be assumed by women in the society; and

(iv) Any laws, practices or conditions concerning or affecting women which impose special limitations or burdens upon them or upon society, or which limit or tend to limit opportunities available to women.

(b) The commission shall act as an information center on the status of women and women's educational, employment and other related needs.

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

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

(ii) Developing programs to encourage and enable women to be fully contributing members of society.

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

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

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