MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION 2001

By: Senator(s) Tollison
To: Public Health and Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2377

AN ACT TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE EXISTING VULNERABLE ADULT AND ELDERLY SERVICES IN THE STATE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE; TO REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO SUBMIT TO THE LEGISLATURE A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds that:

(a) Services to the elderly and vulnerable adults are reportedly inadequate in the State of Mississippi;
(b) The structure of the service delivery system is reportedly not efficient and effective for adequate implementation of services;
(c) No guardianship program exists in the State of Mississippi;
(d) Coordination of services is lacking and gaps exist regarding needed services to the elderly and vulnerable adults in the State of Mississippi;
(e) There is no funding for the Vulnerable Adults Act which was originally enacted in 1986; and
(f) Few services exist to aid families and care givers with the care of vulnerable adults and elderly family members which could prevent the abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults and the elderly.

SECTION 2. (1) There is hereby created a task force to study the existing vulnerable adult and elderly services in this state, specifically but not exclusively to:

(a) Determine the gaps and duplication in services to vulnerable adults and the elderly in this state;
(b) Determine the barriers to service delivery;
(c) Examine the structure of the current service delivery systems for effectiveness and efficiency;
(d) Determine needed services and structural changes in the service delivery system;
(e) Examine current prevention of abuse and neglect programs and services, i.e., adult foster care, respite care, adult day care, voluntary services, and care giver support groups;
(f) Review existing programs, services and service delivery systems in other states; and
(g) Review funding needs for implementation of the Vulnerable Adults Act and the creation of needed services, and to examine the need for a public guardianship in the state.

(2) The task force shall be composed of the following members:

(a) One (1) member of the Senate to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;
(b) One (1) member of the House of Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;
(c) One (1) member selected by the Mississippi Conference on Chancery Judges;
(d) One (1) member selected by the American Association of Retired Persons;
(e) One (1) member selected by the Association of Retarded Citizens;
(f) One (1) member selected by the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill;
(g) One (1) member selected by the Alzheimer's Association;
(h) One (1) member selected by the Veterans of Foreign Wars Association;
(i) The Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid;
(j) One (1) member representative from the Office of the Long-term Care Ombudsman Program;

(k) One (1) member selected by the Mississippi Hospital Association;

(l) The Director of the Division of Family and Children's Services, Department of Human Services;

(m) The Director of the Adult and Aging Services, Department of Human Services;

(n) One (1) member selected by the National Association of Social Workers;

(o) One (1) member selected by the Mississippi Medical Association;

(p) One (1) member selected by the Mississippi Chancery Clerk Association; and

(q) One (1) member selected by the Office of Rural Legal Services.

(3) Funding for the task force may be provided from any funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature for that purpose, or from any funds available from other sources.

(4) Members of the board shall not receive any compensation or per diem, but may receive travel reimbursement provided in Section 25-3-41, except that the legislators shall receive per diem and expenses which shall be paid from the contingent expense funds of their respective houses in the same amount as provided for committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session; however, no per diem and expenses for attending meetings of the task force shall be paid to legislators while the Legislature is in session.

(5) The task force shall submit to the Legislature on or before January 1, 2002, a report of its findings and recommendations, and upon filing the report, shall be dissolved.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.