

By: Representative Eads

To: Public Health and Welfare; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 485

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ELDERLY AND VULNERABLE ADULT SERVICES
2 TASK FORCE; TO CHARGE THE TASK FORCE WITH THE DUTY TO MAKE A
3 COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF EXISTING SERVICES FOR ELDERLY AND
4 VULNERABLE ADULTS AND TO SUBMIT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION BY THE
5 LEGISLATURE AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH AGENCIES TO MAKE SERVICES MORE
6 AVAILABLE FOR THOSE ADULTS; TO PROVIDE FOR THE COMPOSITION OF THE
7 TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE TASK FORCE SHALL MAKE A REPORT OF
8 ITS WORK TO THE LEGISLATURE AND THE GOVERNOR BEFORE DECEMBER 1,
9 2003; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature finds that:

12 (a) Services to the elderly population of our state and
13 to vulnerable adults are inadequate in the state;

14 (b) The structure of the service delivery system is not
15 effective for adequate implementation of needed services;

16 (c) No specific guardianship program for elderly and
17 vulnerable adults exists in the state;

18 (d) Coordination of various available services is
19 necessary for the adequate delivery of services to the elderly and
20 vulnerable adults in the state;

21 (e) There has been insufficient funding of the
22 requirements and programs described in the Mississippi Vulnerable
23 Adults Act which was originally enacted in 1986 and is found in
24 Chapter 47, Title 43, Mississippi Code of 1972; and

25 (f) There are few services to aid families and
26 care-givers with the care of vulnerable adults and the elderly
27 family members, which could prevent the abuse and neglect of that
28 group.

29 (2) There is created the Elderly and Vulnerable Adult
30 Services Task Force, the duties of which shall be to study the



31 existing vulnerable adult and elderly services in the state, and
32 specifically to:

33 (a) Make a comprehensive study of existing services for
34 elderly and vulnerable adults;

35 (b) Determine the barriers, gaps and duplications in
36 services to vulnerable adults and the elderly in the state;

37 (c) Examine the structure of the current service
38 delivery systems for effectiveness and efficiency;

39 (d) Determine needed services and structural changes in
40 the service delivery system;

41 (e) Examine current prevention of abuse and neglect
42 programs and services, such as adult foster care, respite care,
43 adult day care, volunteer services and care-giver support groups;

44 (f) Review existing programs, services and service
45 delivery systems in other states;

46 (g) Review funding needs for implementation of the
47 Vulnerable Adults Act and the creation of needed services;

48 (h) Examine the need for a state public guardianship
49 program specifically designed for elderly and vulnerable adults;
50 and

51 (i) Make recommendations for actions by the Legislature
52 and executive branch agencies to make services for elderly and
53 vulnerable adults more available for residents of Mississippi.

54 (3) The task force shall be composed of twenty-five (25)
55 members as follows:

56 (a) Two (2) members of the Senate appointed by the
57 Lieutenant Governor;

58 (b) Two (2) members of the House of Representatives
59 appointed by the Speaker of the House;

60 (c) The Director of the Medicaid waiver program, to be
61 appointed by the Executive Director of the Division of Medicaid;

62 (d) The Director of the Division of Family and
63 Children's Services of the Department of Human Services;



64 (e) The Director of the Division of Aging and Adult
65 Services of the Department of Human Services;

66 (f) One (1) person who is a physician licensed in
67 Mississippi, to be appointed by the Governor; and

68 (g) Sixteen (16) other persons appointed by the
69 Governor. In making appointments to the task force, the Governor
70 shall:

71 (i) Endeavor to achieve a diverse representation
72 of the citizens of our state, with all socioeconomic and cultural
73 populations and geographical areas of the state being represented;

74 (ii) Appoint representatives of the following
75 professions, distinct communities or special interest groups:
76 chancery court judges and clerks, advocates for mentally ill and
77 retarded citizens, retired persons, advocates for citizens
78 suffering from Alzheimer's disease, military veterans, social
79 workers, administrators of nursing homes and hospitals, religious
80 leaders, attorneys providing rural legal services, and individuals
81 who are care-givers to elderly or vulnerable adults; and

82 (iii) Endeavor to ensure that at least one-third
83 (1/3) of his appointments consist of individuals who work directly
84 with the elderly in some capacity.

85 (4) At its first meeting, the task force shall elect a
86 chairman and vice chairman from its membership, and shall adopt
87 rules for transacting its business and keeping records. Members
88 of the task force shall receive a per diem in the amount provided
89 in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the business of the
90 task force. Members of the task force other than the legislative
91 members shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred
92 while engaged in official business of the task force in accordance
93 with Section 25-3-41, and the legislative members of the task
94 force shall receive the expense allowance provided for in Section
95 5-1-47.



96 (5) Before December 1, 2003, the task force shall make a
97 report of its work and recommendations for action, and it shall
98 submit a copy of the report to the Legislature and the Governor.

99 (6) The task force shall be assigned to the Governor's
100 Office for administrative purposes only, and the Governor's Office
101 shall designate staff to assist the task force. The task force
102 may solicit grants, donations and other funds, and may accept and
103 expend any funds that are made available to the task force to
104 carry out its purpose.

105 (7) All agencies, departments, offices and institutions of
106 the state, including the state universities and the community and
107 junior colleges, shall cooperate with the task force with such
108 assistance as requested by the task force.

109 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
110 and after July 1, 2003.

