HOUSE BILL NO. 621

AN ACT TO CREATE THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LAND LOSS TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE DUTIES OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR COMPENSATION FOR THE MEMBERS OF THE TASK FORCE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds that:

(a) From the newly freed slaves of 1863 to today's Black farmers, African Americans have fought to acquire and maintain land, and encountered crippling obstacles along the way;

(b) In 1910, nearly one million (1,000,000) Black farmers in the United States owned a total of fifteen million (15,000,000) acres and by 1969 they held only six million (6,000,000) acres;

(c) In 1920, Blacks owned fourteen percent (14%) of the nation's farms and today there are only eighteen thousand (18,000) Black farmers, representing less than one percent (1%) of all farms; and

(d) Black citizens of this state and in particular the Black farmers are not immune to factors that cause them to lose their land.

SECTION 2. (1) There is hereby created the African-American Land Loss Task Force to study problems associated with the loss of real property ownership by African Americans and to recommend legislation and other methods of remedying the loss of real property ownership by African Americans.

(2) The task force shall be composed of the following persons appointed as follows:

(a) One (1) person appointed by the Governor.
(b) One (1) person appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

(c) One (1) person appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

(d) One (1) person appointed by the President of Jackson State University.

(e) One (1) person appointed by the President of Alcorn State University.

(f) One (1) person appointed by the President of Mississippi Valley State University.

(g) Three (3) persons appointed by the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus.

(3) The chair and vice chair of the task force shall be elected at the first meeting by the members of the task force, which shall be held at a time and place as provided by the Mississippi Black Caucus.

(4) The task force shall recommend legislation and other methods of remedying the loss of real property ownership by African Americans. Upon the request of the chair, the Secretary of the Senate and the Clerk of the House shall provide the clerical assistance necessary for the work of the task force.

(5) The task force shall report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature on or before the first legislative day of the 2004 Regular Session of the Legislature, whereupon the task force shall stand dissolved and discharged of further duties and liabilities.

(6) Each legislative member of the task force shall be entitled to his or her regular legislative compensation, per diem and travel expenses for each day he or she attends a meeting of the task force which shall be paid out of any funds appropriated to the use of the Legislature. Notwithstanding the foregoing, no legislative member shall receive additional legislative compensation or per diem when the Legislature is in session or if
a legislative member is being paid any other payments on the same

dates for attendance of other state business.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from

and after its passage.