

By: Representatives Fleming, Bailey, Banks, Broomfield, Coleman (29th), Coleman (65th), Dickson, Ellis, Espy, Evans, Fredericks, Harrison, Hines, Morris, Myers, Robinson (63rd), Scott (80th), Straughter, Thomas, Watson, West, Young

To: Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 621

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

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

6 **SECTION 1.** The Legislature finds that:

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

10 (b) In 1910, nearly one million (1,000,000) Black  
11 farmers in the United States owned a total of fifteen million  
12 (15,000,000) acres and by 1969 they held only six million  
13 (6,000,000) acres;

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

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

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

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

28 (a) One (1) person appointed by the Governor.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



62 a legislative member is being paid any other payments on the same  
63 dates for attendance of other state business.

64         **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
65 and after its passage.

