SENATE BILL NO. 2841

AN ACT TO CREATE THE STATE TRUTH COMMISSION; TO PRESCRIBE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PROCEDURES TO INVESTIGATE GRIEVANCES REGISTERED WITH THE COMMISSION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. There is created the State Truth Commission, hereinafter referred to as the "commission." The commission consists of five (5) members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor shall designate one (1) of the members as chairman. Each member shall devote his or her full time to the duties of his or her office and shall not engage in any other business or profession or hold any other public office.

SECTION 2. (1) The chairman of the commission may appoint assistants, officers, employees, committees and consultants for the commission as necessary and may prescribe their powers and duties.

(2) The chairman of the commission may create, abolish, transfer and consolidate offices within the commission as necessary for the efficient operation of the commission.

(3) In conducting the activities of the commission pursuant to this act, the chairman of the commission may request and receive assistance, information and data from any agency of the state, any political subdivision of the state or any public authority of the state.

SECTION 3. (1) The commission has the following powers and duties:
(a) To advise and assist the Governor and the Legislature in developing policies, plans and programs to increase racial diversity and enhance racial harmony in the state.

(b) To foster and promote research and study in the area of race relations.

(c) To investigate, review or take any other action as it deems necessary to answer complaints or grievances filed with the council regarding any state or local government agency or program.

(d) To make recommendations to administrators of state agencies in keeping with paragraph (a) of this section.

(e) To visit, inspect and appraise the management of state and local government programs.

(f) To establish procedures to assure the effective investigation of grievances brought to the attention of the commission concerning allegations of past racial problems. The procedures shall include receipt of written complaints, interviews of persons and on-site monitoring of conditions. In addition, the commission shall establish procedures for the speedy and impartial review of grievances.

(g) To place members of its staff, as it deems appropriate, as an outside monitor if, in the judgment of the commission, conditions warrant it.

(h) To establish, maintain and operate a training program for personnel employed by any state or local government agency or program for voluntary training opportunities.

(i) To collect and disseminate statistical and other information and to undertake research, studies and analyses through the personnel of the commission or in cooperation with any public or private agency.

(j) To adopt, amend or rescind the rules and regulations as necessary to perform the powers and duties of the commission.
(3) The commission, any member of the commission or any employee designated by the commission may require from any officer or employee of a state or local government agency or program any information necessary to carry out the powers and duties of the commission.

(4) The commission, any member of the commission or any employee designated by the commission may issue and enforce a subpoena and a subpoena duces tecum, administer oaths and examine persons under oath in accordance with civil laws and rules.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2003.