

By: Representative Frierson

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1269

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI COMMISSION ON THE HOLOCAUST;
2 TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE FOR
3 THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 SECTION 1. The Legislature of the State of Mississippi finds
6 and declares that:

7 (a) During the period from 1933 to 1945, six million
8 (6,000,000) Jews and millions of other Europeans were murdered in
9 Nazi concentration camps as part of a carefully orchestrated
10 program of cultural, social and political genocide known as the
11 Holocaust;

12 (b) All people should remember the horrible atrocities
13 committed at that time and other times in human history as the
14 result of bigotry and tyranny, and therefore should continually
15 rededicate themselves to the principles of human rights and equal
16 protection under the laws of a democratic society;

17 (c) It is desirable to educate our citizens about the
18 events leading up to the Holocaust and about the organizations and
19 facilities that were created and used purposefully for the
20 systematic destruction of human beings;

21 (d) Holocaust history is the proper concern of all
22 people, particularly students enrolled in the schools, colleges
23 and universities of the State of Mississippi;

24 (e) Programs, workshops, institutes, seminars,
25 exhibits, and other teacher-training activities for the study of
26 the Holocaust have taken place during recent years at various

27 middle schools, high schools, colleges and universities in this
28 state; and

29 (f) It is desirable to create a permanent state
30 commission, which as an organized body and on a continuous basis,
31 will survey, design, encourage and promote implementation of
32 Holocaust education and awareness programs in Mississippi, and
33 will be responsible for organizing and promoting the
34 memorialization of the Holocaust on a regular basis throughout the
35 state.

36 **SECTION 2.** (1) There is created the Mississippi Commission
37 on the Holocaust in the executive branch of state government. The
38 commission shall be assigned to the Office of the Secretary of
39 State for administrative purposes only.

40 (2) The commission shall be composed of the following
41 members:

42 (a) Ex officio members as follows:

43 (i) The State Superintendent of Public Education
44 or his or her designee;

45 (ii) Commissioner of Institutions of Higher
46 Learning or his or her designee;

47 (b) Public members as follows:

48 (i) Seven (7) public members, at least one (1)
49 from each of the congressional districts, to be appointed by the
50 Governor;

51 (ii) Five (5) public members, at least one (1)
52 from each of the congressional districts, to be appointed by the
53 Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

54 (iii) Five (5) public members, at least one (1)
55 from each of the congressional districts, to be appointed by the
56 Lieutenant Governor.

57 (c) The public members of the commission shall be
58 residents of this state and shall be appointed with due regard for

59 broad geographic representation. The public members should
60 include, but are not be limited to, the following:

61 (i) Individuals who have served prominently as
62 spokespersons for or as leaders of organizations or corporations
63 that serve members of religious, ethnic, national heritage, or
64 social groups that were subjected to genocide, torture, wrongful
65 deprivation of liberty or property, officially imposed or
66 sanctioned violence, and other forms of human rights violations
67 and persecution at the hands of the Nazis and their collaborators
68 during the Nazi era;

69 (ii) Individuals who are experienced in the field
70 of Holocaust education;

71 (iii) Individuals who represent liberators of
72 victims of the Holocaust; or

73 (iv) Lay persons who have an interest in Holocaust
74 education.

75 (d) Public members of the commission shall be appointed
76 for the terms of five (5) years and until their respective
77 successors are appointed and qualified. Public members may be
78 eligible for reappointment. The office of any member of the
79 commission who fails to attend more than two (2) consecutive
80 meetings of the commission without an excuse approved by a
81 resolution of the commission shall become vacant. All vacancies
82 shall be filled by appointment in the same manner as the original
83 appointment, and the person appointed to fill a vacancy shall
84 serve for the remainder of the unexpired term.

85 (e) The commission shall have a chairperson who shall
86 be appointed by the Governor for a term of five (5) years and
87 until his or her successor is appointed and qualified.

88 (f) Seven (7) members of the commission shall
89 constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the
90 commission. Public members shall have the right to vote on any

91 matter before the commission, but ex officio members and their
92 designees shall not have the right to vote.

93 (g) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
94 appoint a member of the House of Representatives and the
95 Lieutenant Governor shall appoint a member of the Senate to serve
96 as advisors to the commission.

97 (3) The Mississippi Commission on the Holocaust shall adopt
98 rules and regulations and set standards and policies for the
99 organization, operation, management, budgeting and programs of the
100 commission.

101 (a) The commission shall provide, based upon the
102 collective knowledge and experience of its members, assistance and
103 advice to public and private schools, colleges and universities
104 with respect to the implementation of Holocaust education and
105 awareness programs.

106 (b) The commission shall meet with appropriate
107 education officials and other interested public and private
108 organizations, including service organizations, for the purpose of
109 providing information, planning, coordination, or modification of
110 courses of study or programs dealing with the subject of the
111 Holocaust.

112 (c) The commission shall survey and catalogue the
113 extent of the Holocaust and genocide education presently being
114 incorporated into the curricula and taught in the educational
115 system of this state.

116 (d) The commission shall inventory those Holocaust
117 memorials, exhibits and resources that could not be incorporated
118 into courses of study or programs at various locations and other
119 educational agencies for the development and implementation of
120 Holocaust and genocide education programs. In furtherance of this
121 responsibility, the commission may contact and cooperate with
122 existing Holocaust and genocide public and private nonprofit
123 resource organizations and may act as a liaison concerning

124 Holocaust and genocide education or members of the United States
125 Senate and House of Representatives, the Mississippi Senate and
126 House of Representatives, the United States Holocaust Memorial
127 Museum and other national and international Holocaust agencies.

128 (e) The commission shall compile a roster of individual
129 volunteers who are willing to share their verifiable knowledge and
130 experience in classrooms, seminars and workshops on the subject of
131 the Holocaust. The volunteers may be survivors of the Holocaust,
132 liberators of concentration camps, scholars, members of the
133 clergy, community relations professionals, and other persons who,
134 by virtue of their experience, education, or interest, have
135 experience with the Holocaust.

136 (f) The commission shall coordinate events
137 memorializing the Holocaust and seeks volunteers who are willing
138 and able to participate in commemorative events that will enhance
139 public awareness of the significance of the Holocaust.

140 (g) The commission shall prepare reports for the
141 Governor and the Legislature regarding its findings and
142 recommendations to facilitate the inclusion of Holocaust studies
143 and special programs memorializing the Holocaust in educational
144 systems of this state.

145 (8) The commission shall appoint advisory committees to
146 advise the commission on the fulfillment of its duties.

147 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
148 and after July 1, 2004.