

By: Representative Holland

To: Public Health and Human Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1407

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI CLEARINGHOUSE FOR PEOPLE  
2 WITH DISABILITIES AND PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP; TO PRESCRIBE THE  
3 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** The following terms shall have the meaning  
6 ascribed in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

7 (a) "Clearinghouse" means the Mississippi Clearinghouse  
8 for People with Disabilities.

9 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Mississippi  
10 Clearinghouse for People with Disabilities.

11 (c) "People with disabilities" means individuals who  
12 have physical, sensory, cognitive or mental characteristics, such  
13 as those listed under the definition of "handicapped person" in  
14 regular 28CFR 41.31 (b) for the implementation of Section 504 of  
15 the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Public Law 93-112).

16 **SECTION 2.** (1) There is created the Mississippi  
17 Clearinghouse for People with Disabilities to promote and  
18 facilitate the full participation of, and the creation and  
19 assurance of equal opportunities for, all people with  
20 disabilities.

21 (2) The goals and objectives of the clearinghouse shall  
22 include, but are not limited to, or provided in any priority  
23 order, the following:

24 (a) To be a comprehensive clearinghouse of information,  
25 initial point of contact and confidential case tracking service  
26 for all people with disabilities related to potential service  
27 programs (Including contact points, eligibility criteria, service

28 scope, budgets, waiting list), disability rights and relevant  
29 events.

30 (b) To serve as a disability minority advocate to  
31 identify the issues and concerns pertaining to the rights, needs  
32 and capabilities of all persons with disabilities and to work to  
33 empower those individuals to take as much control of their own  
34 lives as possible.

35 (c) To collect, analyze and synthesize  
36 disability-related data (e.g., numbers and types of disability, in  
37 the state, their economic/school/employment/long-term care status)  
38 for use by state agencies, universities and colleges, disability  
39 organizations and private citizens.

40 (d) To advise the Governor, the Legislature, the  
41 Mississippi congressional delegation, state agencies, the business  
42 community, organized labor and other public and private groups and  
43 the general public on disability issues and concerns, and to make  
44 recommendations to address those identified matters, with emphasis  
45 on increasing opportunities for independence and employment.

46 (e) To coordinate and conduct public relations  
47 activities to spotlight the skills and capabilities of people with  
48 disabilities to emphasize the actual and potential contributions  
49 of people with disabilities.

50 (f) To establish such relationships with state  
51 agencies, especially those that serve the disability community,  
52 consumer/advocacy groups, local governments, private industry,  
53 educational institutions, labor and other private organizations,  
54 as may be needed to enhance equal opportunities for persons with  
55 disabilities.

56 (g) To submit an annual report to the Governor and the  
57 Legislature that reflects input from the State Department of  
58 Education, State Department of Health, Department of Human  
59 Services, Division of Medicaid, State Department of Mental Health,  
60 State Department of Rehabilitation Services, State Independent

61 Living Council, Centers For Independent Living and disability  
62 support and advocacy organizations. The report will provide:

63 (i) Recommendations to address the unmet needs of  
64 people with disabilities in Mississippi;

65 (ii) An overall state government/private sector  
66 service overview of programs and services for people with  
67 disabilities in Mississippi;

68 (iii) Information on public and private groups  
69 that are providing equal opportunities for persons with  
70 disabilities.

71 (h) To carry out activities assigned by the  
72 clearinghouse, to further the mission of the clearinghouse and the  
73 quality of life of citizens with disabilities.

74 (3) The clearinghouse will be administered by the  
75 Mississippi Coalition for Citizens With Disabilities (MCPD). the  
76 director of the MCPD will serve as the MCPD Director and may  
77 employ necessary support staff, not to exceed four (4) persons.  
78 The Department of Finance and Administration may contract with  
79 MCPD. The staffing of the clearinghouse also may be supplemented  
80 by use of interns and volunteers from the community. The  
81 clearinghouse staff shall use the following classifications for  
82 selection: The director shall be paid according to the job  
83 classification of a Division Director II as defined by the State  
84 Personnel Board. The director shall have a least ten (10) years  
85 experience in nongovernmental disability advocacy, and at least  
86 five (5) years experience in disability advocacy management. Any  
87 administration staff shall meet the qualifications and be paid  
88 according to the job classification of a Division Director I as  
89 defined by the State Personnel Board. Any secretarial staff shall  
90 meet the qualifications and be paid according to the job  
91 classification of an administrative assistant IV as defined by the  
92 Mississippi State Personnel Board.

93           (4) The state Department of Education, State Department of  
94 Health, Department of Human Services, Division of Medicaid, State  
95 Department of Mental Health and State Department of Rehabilitation  
96 Services shall assist the clearinghouse to carry out its work.  
97 These representatives shall provide the clearinghouse resources to  
98 facilitate their planning and coordinating efforts.

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