

By: Representative Holland

To: Rules

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 81

1 A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION TO CREATE AND EMPOWER THE MISSISSIPPI
2 COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF CHILDREN; TO PRESCRIBE THE POWERS AND
3 DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION; TO ESTABLISH A COALITION OF STATE
4 INTERAGENCY AND PRIVATE AGENCIES TO ADDRESS ISSUES AFFECTING THE
5 STATUS OF CHILDREN IN MISSISSIPPI; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

6 WHEREAS, the State of Mississippi does encourage, promote and
7 foster the success and well-being of all its citizens and desires
8 to provide them with opportunities to realize the quality of life
9 to which they aspire; and

10 WHEREAS, it is a higher public purpose of state government to
11 ensure that no child in this state is denied the opportunity to
12 succeed and make positive contributions to Mississippi's future
13 and its quality of life; and

14 WHEREAS, the creation of a Commission on the Status of
15 Children will address issues affecting the status of children in
16 the State of Mississippi:

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF
18 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI, THE SENATE CONCURRING
19 THEREIN, That there is hereby created the Commission on the Status
20 of Children, hereinafter referred to as "the commission," for the
21 purpose of addressing issues affecting the status of children in
22 the state.

23 The commission shall be nonpartisan and composed of 13
24 persons appointed with the advice and consent of the Senate, as
25 follows:

26 (a) On or before July 1, 2004, the Governor shall appoint
27 four members, including a parent who is a current or former food
28 stamps and/or TANF recipient and a single parent;

29 (b) On or before July 1, 2004, the Lieutenant Governor shall
30 appoint three members, including a current or formerly licensed
31 social worker with expertise in children's issues;

32 (c) On or before July 1, 2004, the Speaker of the House of
33 Representatives shall appoint three members, including a health
34 care professional knowledgeable in children's health issues; and

35 (d) On or before July 1, 2004, the Attorney General shall
36 appoint three members, including a member of the youth court with
37 expertise in children's issues.

38 The initial term of office of one member appointed by the
39 Governor shall expire on June 30, 2005. The initial terms of
40 office of the remaining members shall be fixed by the appointing
41 authorities so that the term of office of one member appointed by
42 each appointing authority expires on June 30, 2005, the term of
43 office of one member appointed by each expires on June 30, 2006,
44 and the terms of office of the remaining four members expire on
45 June 30, 2007.

46 The Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House and Attorney
47 General shall notify the Governor after they have made their
48 appointments. The Governor then shall designate a place and time
49 in Jackson, Mississippi, for the initial organizational meeting of
50 the commission, which meeting must be on or before September 1,
51 2004.

52 It is the intent of the Legislature that the members of the
53 commission shall be women and men of recognized ability and
54 achievement who are representative of the ethnic, geographic,
55 socioeconomic and cultural diversity of the population of this
56 state, and who have a proven record of efforts to improve the
57 status of children.

58 The commission shall adopt rules for its efficient operation,
59 which may include designation of its organizational structure,
60 including officers and committees, duties of officers and
61 committees, a process for selecting officers, quorum requirements

62 for committees, provisions for special or ad hoc committees and
63 other such procedures as may be necessary. The commission may
64 establish committees responsible for conducting specific
65 commission programs.

66 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the commission shall:

67 (a) Serve an advocacy and public awareness role with the
68 general public regarding child welfare issues;

69 (b) Conduct studies on the status of Mississippi's children,
70 child welfare and related issues;

71 (c) Establish a coalition of state interagency and private
72 agencies to address issues affecting the status of children in
73 Mississippi;

74 (d) Act as an information center on the status of child
75 welfare needs;

76 (e) Hold hearings, make and sign any agreements and do or
77 perform any acts that may be necessary, desirable or proper to
78 carry out the purposes of this resolution;

79 (f) Cooperate with any state agency, authority, board,
80 commission, department or institution to facilitate the
81 implementation of the powers and duties granted to the commission
82 in this resolution; and each such state agency, authority, board,
83 commission, department or institution shall cooperate with the
84 commission in the performance of its duties;

85 (g) Apply for and accept funds, grants, gifts and services
86 from the state, the government of the United States or any of its
87 agencies, or any other public or private source, for the purpose
88 of defraying costs as may be necessary in carrying out its duties
89 under this resolution;

90 (h) Recommend to the Governor and the Legislature
91 appropriate policies to improve the educational, economic and
92 health status of children; and

93 (i) Report annually, not later than December 31 of each
94 year, to the Governor and the Legislature regarding its activities

95 under this resolution, the progress made toward improving the
96 quality of life of Mississippi's children and the actions taken
97 with regard to recommendations previously made.

98 The commission shall meet and conduct business at least
99 semiannually, but not more often than once a month. All meetings
100 of the commission and any committees of the commission shall be
101 open to the public, with opportunities for public comment provided
102 on a regular basis. Notice of all meetings shall be given as
103 provided in the Open Meetings Act, Section 25-41-1 et seq.,
104 Mississippi Code of 1972, and appropriate notice also shall be
105 given to all persons so requesting the date, time and place of
106 each meeting.

107 Members of the commission may be reimbursed for expenses as
108 provided in Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, and may
109 receive a per diem compensation as provided in Section 25-3-69,
110 Mississippi Code of 1972.