

By: Senator(s) Chaney, King

To: Education;
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2731

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT
 2 A PROGRAM TO MAKE AVAILABLE A FULL DAY VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN
 3 PROGRAM BY 2006 FOR FOUR-YEAR OLDS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT
 4 BETWEEN HEAD START, LICENSED CHILD CARE CENTERS AND SCHOOL
 5 DISTRICTS, BEGINNING WITH COUNTIES THAT REFLECT A NEED AS
 6 SUPPORTED BY POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR PRE-KINDERGARTEN FOUR-YEAR
 7 OLDS AND THOSE ACTUALLY BEING SERVED, WITH THE TOTAL
 8 IMPLEMENTATION BY 2008; TO IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM TO MAKE AVAILABLE A
 9 FULL DAY VOLUNTARY PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM BY 2008 FOR THREE-YEAR
 10 OLDS THROUGH A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT BETWEEN HEAD START, LICENSED
 11 CHILD CARE CENTERS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS, BEGINNING WITH COUNTIES
 12 THAT REFLECT A NEED AS REPORTED BY POPULATION ELIGIBLE FOR
 13 PRE-KINDERGARTEN FOR THREE-YEAR OLDS AND THOSE ACTUALLY BEING
 14 SERVED, WITH TOTAL IMPLEMENTATION BY 2010; AND FOR RELATED
 15 PURPOSES.

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

17 **SECTION 1.** (1) As used in this act, the term "four-year
 18 old" means any child age four (4) on or before September 1 and the
 19 term "three-year old" means any child age three (3) on or before
 20 September 1.

21 (2) To ensure that all four-year olds and three-year olds
 22 have access to quality educational services, the Legislature
 23 hereby finds and declares that:

24 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their
 25 preschool children; and

26 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist parents in
 27 their role as the primary caregivers and educators by providing
 28 services for a full day pre-kindergarten program that addresses
 29 instructional, social and emotional needs for four-year old and
 30 three-year old children.

31 (3) The State Board of Education, in collaboration with the
 32 Department of Human Services, shall develop and implement a
 33 voluntary program to provide services for a full day kindergarten

34 program that addresses the cognitive, social and emotional needs
35 of four-year old and three-year old children, subject to the
36 following conditions and provisions:

37 (a) The program shall be voluntary.

38 (b) The State Board of Education, the Department of
39 Human Services, the State Board of Health, the Mississippi Head
40 Start Association, and the public and private early childhood
41 centers shall jointly develop criteria for: (i) the enrollment of
42 four-year old and three-year old children who have predicated
43 significant readiness deficiencies; (ii) the qualifications of
44 personnel employed to serve the said children; (iii) pupil/teacher
45 ratio; (iv) health and safety standards; (v) hours of operation of
46 such programs; and (vi) provide for the transportation of said
47 children.

48 (c) The core curriculum of all such four-year old and
49 three-year old programs will meet or exceed the State Department
50 of Education's Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum Benchmarks.

51 (d) To ensure coordination, the school district will
52 review available educational resources, programs and services in
53 order to avoid duplication of public services.

54 (e) The State Board of Education shall determine a
55 process for interested school districts to apply for grant funds
56 in order to participate in such four-year old programs. Beginning
57 in fiscal year 2005, the State Board of Education shall award
58 grants for not less than one (1) program in each Mississippi
59 congressional district and not more than twenty-five (25) programs
60 in all, and in subsequent years may award additional program
61 grants subject to the availability of funds specifically
62 appropriated thereafter by the Legislature. These programs shall
63 be awarded to targeted school districts which are in need of an
64 instructional program for four-year old children who have
65 predicted significant readiness deficiencies. The State Board of
66 Education will annually determine a cost per child rate which

67 shall be used in funding a targeted program, and shall collaborate
68 with the Department of Human Services in the determination of fair
69 market rates for subsidized child care. The targeted districts
70 will be responsible for blending services for children to avoid
71 duplication in the areas of transportation, personnel, training of
72 personnel, facilities and child nutrition.

73 (f) The State Board of Education shall determine a
74 process for interested school districts, Head Start Centers, and
75 public and private early childhood centers to apply for grant
76 funds in order to participate in such three-year old programs.
77 Beginning in fiscal year 2007, the State Board of Education shall
78 award grants for not less than one (1) program in each Mississippi
79 congressional district and not more than twenty-five (25) programs
80 in all, and in subsequent years may award additional program
81 grants subject to the availability of funds specifically
82 appropriated thereafter by the Legislature. These programs shall
83 be awarded to targeted school districts which are in need of an
84 early childhood program for three-year old children who have
85 predicted significant readiness deficiencies. The State
86 Department of Education will annually determine a cost per child
87 rate which shall be used in funding a targeted program, and shall
88 collaborate with the Department of Human Services in the
89 determination of fair market rates for subsidized child care.

90 (4) The Pre-Kindergarten Education Program Fund is
91 established. Funds made available by the Legislature for the
92 support and maintenance of full day pre-kindergarten education
93 programs authorized under this act shall be deposited into the
94 fund.

95 (5) The State Board of Education shall report to the
96 Legislature on December 1, 2004, and annually thereafter, on the
97 status of programs.

98 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
99 and after July 1, 2004.