

By: Senator(s) Nunnelee

To: Public Health and Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2840

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI CLEARINGHOUSE FOR PEOPLE  
2 WITH DISABILITIES (MCPD) AND PROVIDE FOR ITS MEMBERSHIP; TO  
3 PRESCRIBE THE POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CLEARINGHOUSE; TO DIRECT  
4 CERTAIN STATE AGENCIES TO ASSIST THE MCPD; AND FOR RELATED  
5 PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** The following terms shall have the meaning  
8 ascribed herein, unless the context shall otherwise require:

9 (a) "Clearinghouse" means the Mississippi Clearinghouse  
10 for People with Disabilities.

11 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Mississippi  
12 Clearinghouse for People with Disabilities.

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

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

23 (2) The goals and objectives of the Mississippi  
24 Clearinghouse for People with Disabilities shall include, but are  
25 not limited to, or provided in any priority order, the following:

26 (a) To be a comprehensive clearinghouse of information,  
27 initial point of contact and confidential case tracking service  
28 for all people with disabilities related to potential service

29 programs (including contact points, eligibility criteria, service  
30 scope, budgets, waiting list), disability rights and relevant  
31 events.

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

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

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

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

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

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

62 Health, State Department of Rehabilitation Services, State  
63 Independent Living Council, Centers for Independent Living and  
64 disability support and advocacy organizations. The report will  
65 provide:

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

68 (ii) An overall state government/private sector  
69 service overview of programs and services for people with  
70 disabilities in Mississippi;

71 (iii) Information on public and private groups  
72 which are providing equal opportunities for persons with  
73 disabilities; and

74 (h) To carry out activities assigned by the  
75 Clearinghouse, to further the mission of the MCPD and the quality  
76 of life of citizens with disabilities.

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

95 administrative assistant IV per the Mississippi State Personnel  
96 Board.

97 (4) The State Department of Education, State Department of  
98 Health, State Department of Human Services, State Department of  
99 Medicaid, State Department of Mental Health and State Department  
100 of Rehabilitation Services shall assist the MCPD to carry out its  
101 work. These representatives shall provide the MCPD, with data,  
102 input and resources to facilitate their planning and coordinating  
103 efforts.

104 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
105 and after its passage.