

By: Representative Carlton

To: Rules; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 844

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS OF  
2 THE STATE'S CIVIL DEFENSE COMMUNICATION IMPLEMENTED IN TIMES OF  
3 PENDING NATURAL AND CATASTROPHIC DISASTER AND DECLARED STATES OF  
4 EMERGENCY AND TO MAKE A REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS THEREON TO THE  
5 LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created a task force to study the  
8 effectiveness of the state's civil defense communication used  
9 before, during and after Hurricane Katrina, as well as  
10 communication to be implemented in times of impending natural and  
11 catastrophic disaster and declared states of emergency. The task  
12 force shall make a report of its findings and recommendations to  
13 the Mississippi State Legislature by September 1, 2006, including  
14 any recommended legislation.

15 (2) The task force shall be composed of the following ten  
16 (10) members:

17 (a) Three (3) members of the Mississippi House of  
18 Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the Mississippi House  
19 of Representatives;

20 (b) Three (3) members of the Mississippi Senate  
21 appointed by the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Mississippi;

22 (c) Three (3) members appointed by the Governor of the  
23 State of Mississippi; and

24 (d) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Emergency  
25 Management Agency.

26 (3) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after  
27 the effective date of this act, and, within fifteen (15) days  
28 thereafter on a day to be designated jointly by the Speaker of the

29 House and the Lieutenant Governor, the task force shall meet and  
30 organize by selecting from its membership a chairman and a vice  
31 chairman. The vice chairman shall also serve as secretary and  
32 shall be responsible for keeping all records of the task force. A  
33 majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a  
34 quorum. In the selection of its officers and the adoption of  
35 rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of a majority  
36 of the task force shall be required. All members shall be  
37 notified in writing of all meetings, such notices to be mailed at  
38 least fifteen (15) days before the date on which a meeting is to  
39 be held.

40 (4) The task force shall study and make recommendations  
41 regarding potential legalization addressing the effectiveness of  
42 the communication for civil defense operations used before, during  
43 and after Hurricane Katrina, as well as communication to be  
44 implemented in times of impending natural and catastrophic  
45 disaster and declared states of emergency. The task force, in  
46 coordination with various state agencies, including the Department  
47 of Human Services, the State Department of Health, the Department  
48 of Education, the Department of Insurance, the Mississippi  
49 Military Department, the Mississippi Department of Transportation  
50 and the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, shall establish  
51 working relationships with nongovernment organizations, private  
52 relief organizations and civil defense organizations to better  
53 effectuate the study and to recommend viable solutions for more  
54 effective communication mechanisms.

55 (5) Members of the task force who are not legislators, state  
56 officials or state employees shall be compensated at the per diem  
57 rate authorized by Section 25-3-69 and shall be reimbursed in  
58 accordance with Section 25-3-41 for mileage and actual expenses  
59 incurred in the performance of their duties. Legislative members  
60 of the task force shall be paid from the contingent expense funds  
61 of their respective houses in the same manner as provided for

62 committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session.  
63 However, no per diem or expense for attending meetings of the task  
64 force will be paid to legislative members of the task force while  
65 the Legislature is in session. No task force member may incur per  
66 diem, travel or other expenses unless previously authorized by  
67 vote, at a meeting of the task force, which action shall be  
68 recorded in the official minutes of the meeting. Nonlegislative  
69 members shall be paid from any funds made available to the task  
70 force for that purpose.

71 (6) The task force shall use any staff assistance made  
72 available to it. To effectuate the purposes of this section, any  
73 department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the  
74 state or of any political subdivision thereof shall, at the  
75 request of the chairman of the task force, provide to the task  
76 force such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the task  
77 force properly to carry out its task.

78 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
79 and after its passage.