MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2006

By: Senator(s) Tollison, Horhn, Williamson, Harden, Jordan, Frazier, Jackson (32nd), Butler, Jackson (11th), Turner, Walls

To: Education

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2718

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO MAKE CIVIL RIGHTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION A PART OF THE K-12 CURRICULUM INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE GUIDELINES FOR GRADE LEVEL CLASSROOM LEARNING; TO ESTABLISH A MISSISSIPPI CIVIL RIGHTS EDUCATION COMMISSION TO INVENTORY CIVIL RIGHTS EXHIBITS AND RESOURCES AND COORDINATE CIVIL RIGHTS AWARENESS AND EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Understanding the important role the Civil Rights Movement had on the State of Mississippi and understanding the importance of teaching Mississippi's children all of our history, it is the goal of this Legislature to provide meaningful support to this most important endeavor. Mississippi's central role in the civil rights struggle needs to be formalized and taught as a beacon of hope for all of our citizens.

SECTION 2. The State Board of Education may make civil rights and human rights education a part of the K-12 curriculum of instruction in Mississippi public schools. The State Department of Education shall work with the Mississippi Civil Rights Education Commission established in Section 3 in implementing these five (5) guidelines: (a) provide assistance and advice to K-12 schools with respect to the Civil Rights Movement and human rights education and awareness programs; (b) survey and catalog the extent to which civil rights and human rights education exists in state curricula; (c) inventory civil rights memorials, exhibits and resources that could be used in classrooms and other educational programs; (d) compile a list of volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and experiences concerning the struggle for civil rights; (e) prepare reports for the Governor

and the State Legislature on the inclusion of civil rights studies into the educational systems of the state.

SECTION 3. (1) There is created the Mississippi Civil Rights Education Commission. The commission shall be assigned to the Office of the Secretary of State for administrative purposes only. The commission shall provide or assist education officials and other organizations with information, coordination and modification of courses or programs that include the Civil Rights Movement, and will carry out the specific responsibilities set forth in Section 2. In completing this task, the commission may act as a liaison with various bodies, including the United States Congress, the State Legislature, Teaching for Change, the William Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, as well as other national and international agencies. The commission shall consist of no more than fifteen (15) members, eleven (11) positions of which will be voluntary, to serve with a term of three (3) years on a rotating basis. These positions will be filled by application submitted to a joint committee formed by the William Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi, Tougaloo College, the Oral History Project at the University of Southern Mississippi and Jackson State University. Each of these four (4) entities shall remain permanent members of this commission, with representatives to be appointed by the President or Chancellor of the appropriate institution.

(2) The members of the commission shall be residents of this state and shall be appointed with due regard for broad geographic representation.

(3) The commission shall have a chairperson who shall be designated by the State Superintendent of Education from the commission membership for a term of four (4) years and eight (8) members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of the business of the commission.

(4) The Mississippi Commission on Civil Rights Education shall adopt rules and regulations and set standards and policies for the organization, operation, management, budgeting and programs of the commission.

(5) The commission may apply for and receive gifts, grants and donations from any public or private sources, including federal and private foundation grants. Members of the commission may not be compensated for the performance of their duties except from nonstate funds that are specifically available therefor.

SECTION 4. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2006.