To: Public Health and Human Services

MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE
By: Representatives Dickson, Fleming
REGULAR SESSION 2007

HOUSE BILL NO. 1088
(As Passed the House)

AN ACT TO CREATE A STUDY COMMITTEE ON THE TEMPORARY
ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE
COMMITTEE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE STATE TANF PROGRAM'S
PROGRESS OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS AND MAKE A REPORT TO THE 2008
REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) There is created a Study Committee on the
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Program, which shall
make study and recommendations on all aspects of the state TANF
program's progress over the past ten (10) years. The committee
shall, at a minimum, study and report to the 2008 Regular Session
of the Legislature on the following:

(a) The outcome of state TANF and other welfare
programs for the last ten (10) years.

(b) The economic climate, in terms of looking for
savings in state welfare programs.

(c) The economy's potential to increase the number of
welfare recipients/participants, as well as increasing
expenditures in such areas as child care, which are necessary to
keep recipients in the workforce.

(d) Mississippi's struggle to resolve the issue of
long-term clients.

(e) The state's role in aiding those in need of help
with substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence and
learning disabilities.

(f) The state's ability to continue the innovative
programs that have been established in recent years, including:

(i) Educational after school programs;
(ii) Early childhood development programs; and
(iii) Teen pregnancy programs.

(g) Viability of programs to last based upon the
state's economy and wealth.

(h) The state's flexibility in using the TANF block
grant by meeting the federal work mandates and complying with the
five (5) year time limit on benefits.

(i) The state's flexibility in using the TANF block
grant to assist recipients in vocational, technical and
post-secondary educational opportunities.

(j) Families' ability to move toward self-sufficiency.

(k) The outlook for welfare parents who have found work
at the entry level jobs.

(l) Parents' inability to support their families.

(m) Means of increasing work participation among
recipients of TANF benefits.

(n) Making welfare work on a fixed budget.

The committee shall make a report of its findings and
recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2007, including
any recommended legislation.

(2) The committee shall be composed of the following fifteen
members:

(a) The Chairmen of the Senate and House Appropriation
Committees;

(b) The Chairmen of the Senate Public Health and
Welfare Committee and the House Public Health and Human Services
Committee;

(c) One (1) senator to be appointed by the Lieutenant
Governor;

(d) One (1) representative to be appointed by the
Speaker of the House;

(e) One (1) member of the State Board for Community and
Junior Colleges;
The Executive Director of the State Department of Health, or his designee;

The Executive Director of the Department of Human Services, or his designee;

The Executive Director of the Department of Rehabilitative Services, or his designee;

The Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, or his designee;

The Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health, or his designee;

Two (2) recipients of TANF benefits, one (1) to be appointed by the Speaker of the House, and one (1) to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

The Executive Director of the Mississippi Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers;

The Attorney General, or his designee;

One (1) representative from a statewide youth development organization appointed by the Speaker of the House;

and

One (1) representative from a statewide youth development organization appointed by the Lieutenant Governor.

Appointments to the committee shall be made within thirty (30) days after the effective date of this act. The committee shall hold its first meeting before August 1, 2007. The Chairmen of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee and the House Public Health and Human Services Committee shall serve as cochairmen of the committee.

A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. In the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members shall be required. All members shall be notified in writing of all meetings, the notices to be mailed at least five (5) days before the date on which a meeting is to be held.
(5) Members of the committee shall receive the customary per diem compensation, expense reimbursement and mileage for attending committee meetings as provided in Sections 25-3-41 and 25-3-69.

(6) The committee is authorized to accept funds from any source, public or private, to be expended in implementing its duties under this section.

(7) To effectuate the purposes of this section, any department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the state or any political subdivision thereof, shall, at the request of the cochairs of the committee, provide such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the committee to properly carry out its duties.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2007.