

By: Representatives McCoy, Burnett, Hines,
Mayo, Perkins

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1491

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, ACTING
2 JOINTLY WITH THE MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTER, TO
3 ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM AIMED AT PREVENTING TEENAGE PREGNANCY;
4 TO PROVIDE THAT THE PILOT PROGRAM WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE EAST
5 TALLAHATCHIE CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR AN INITIAL PERIOD OF
6 TWO YEARS, BEGINNING IN THE 2007-2008 SCHOOL YEAR; TO REQUIRE THE
7 DEPARTMENT TO REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF
8 THE PROGRAM BEFORE OCTOBER 1, 2008; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature finds that national studies
11 rank the State of Mississippi as having the highest rate of teen
12 pregnancy. In 2004, the Delta region ranked higher in the
13 percentage of births to single mothers and more specifically,
14 percentage of births to single teenagers, than the state average,
15 and nine (9) of the ten (10) counties in the state having the
16 highest percentage of births to single teens were in the
17 Mississippi Delta region. The Legislature further finds that
18 preventing early childbearing would eliminate a huge amount of
19 poverty in the Delta, thereby revitalizing the region and
20 improving the quality of life for all Delta region citizens.

21 (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that this act
22 establish an aggressive and focused strategy to reduce teen
23 pregnancy in the Delta through the establishment of a pilot
24 program designed for one (1) school district which will serve as a
25 model for success in reducing teen pregnancy throughout the
26 region, as well as directing the mindset of teenagers in the
27 region to one characterized by healthy, responsible choices.

28 (3) The State Department of Education, acting jointly with
29 the Mississippi Community Education Center, shall establish a
30 pilot program aimed at preventing teenage pregnancy. The pilot

31 program will be implemented in the East Tallahatchie Consolidated
32 School District for an initial period of two (2) years, beginning
33 in the 2007-2008 school year. During the first year of
34 implementation, the State Department of Education, in its
35 discretion, may expand the program to also include the West
36 Tallahatchie Consolidated School District.

37 (4) The pilot program created under this section will be
38 designed for students who are ten (10) years of age and older,
39 their parents and members of the local community. The State
40 Department of Education shall develop an age appropriate
41 curriculum aimed specifically at preventing teenage pregnancy and
42 educating expectant teen parents. The prevention of pregnancy
43 curriculum must be integrated into the currently existing
44 curriculum for students at each grade level, beginning with the
45 fifth grade, and incorporated into the students' ordinary school
46 day schedule. In addition, students and parents shall be required
47 to participate in weekly sessions held in the evenings which
48 present meaningful information pertaining to abstinence and
49 healthy choices on the part of teenagers.

50 (5) The State Department of Education shall establish
51 appropriate measures to determine the success of the pilot
52 program. Before October 1, 2008, the department shall prepare and
53 submit a report to the chairpersons of the Education Committees of
54 the House of Representatives and Senate on the effectiveness of
55 the program and making recommendations on whether or not the pilot
56 program should be extended and expanded to include other school
57 districts throughout the Delta region. For purposes of this
58 section, the term "Delta region" is defined as the western section
59 of the State of Mississippi that lies between the Mississippi and
60 Yazoo Rivers, encompassing in part or whole the counties of
61 Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys,
62 Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey,
63 Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and Yazoo.

64 (6) In addition to those funds that may be appropriated by
65 the Legislature for this pilot program, the State Department of
66 Education may receive and expend funds made available to the
67 department from any source, including any federal or other
68 governmental agency, private business, industry, foundation or
69 other organization, for the prevention of teen pregnancy pilot
70 program. Any state appropriations made for the support of the
71 program must be made to the State Department of Education.

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