

By: Senator(s) Chaney

To: Education;  
Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2322

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A VOLUNTARY  
3 PILOT PROGRAM FOR PREKINDERGARTEN-AGE CHILDREN CONTINGENT UPON  
4 APPROPRIATIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-21-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 37-21-51. (1) As used in Sections 37-21-51 through  
9 37-21-55, the term "preschool children" means any children who  
10 have not entered kindergarten.

11 (2) To ensure that all children have access to quality early  
12 childhood education and development services, the Legislature  
13 finds and declares the following:

14 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their  
15 young preschool children;

16 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist and educate  
17 parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of  
18 young preschool children; and

19 (c) There is a need to explore innovative approaches  
20 and strategies for aiding parents and families in the education  
21 and development of young preschool children.

22 (3) The State Board of Education shall implement a voluntary  
23 pilot program for four-year-old children beginning with the  
24 2007-2008 school year contingent upon the availability of funds  
25 specifically appropriated therefor. An equal number of programs  
26 will be funded in each of the state's four (4) congressional  
27 districts. Pilot programs shall be selected for funding based  
28 upon a competitive request for proposals process. The Request for

29 Proposals (RFP) shall be developed by an oversight committee  
30 representing the Mississippi Department of Education, the  
31 Mississippi Department of Human Services, the Mississippi Head  
32 Start Association, the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office  
33 and two (2) representatives from private/parochial child care  
34 programs. Grant criteria will require collaboration with other  
35 programs such as public school prekindergarten, licensed child  
36 care centers, and Head Start. Contingent upon appropriations, the  
37 State Department of Education shall conduct an evaluation of the  
38 preschool pilot programs and shall submit a report to the  
39 Legislature regarding the effectiveness of the pilot programs  
40 annually.

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