

By: Senator(s) Jordan, Jackson (11th),  
Thomas, Clarke, Walls, Simmons, Harden,  
Williamson, Dawkins

To: Public Health and  
Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2738

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE THAT THE LEGISLATURE SHALL PROVIDE  
2 SUFFICIENT FUNDING TO FULLY FUND THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE  
3 PROGRAM AND MEDICAID PROGRAMS; TO AUTHORIZE THE GOVERNOR TO  
4 REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF MEDICAID TO APPLY FOR GRANTS FROM  
5 FOUNDATIONS AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS FOR THE PURPOSE OF MARKETING  
6 THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM IN THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA  
7 REGION; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE DELTA TO DEMONSTRATE TO  
8 THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH THEIR UNSUCCESSFUL EFFORTS TO  
9 EMPLOY A SCHOOL NURSE; TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
10 TO DEVELOP A MEANS TO ENSURE THAT ANNUAL PHYSICALS ARE PROVIDED,  
11 FREE OF CHARGE, TO ALL STUDENTS IN KINDERGARTEN THROUGH TWELFTH  
12 GRADE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE DELTA REGION; AND FOR RELATED  
13 PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Legislature finds that the most  
16 fundamental aspect of a good quality of life is good health.  
17 Healthy people are happier, more productive and less costly to  
18 insure. According to the Mississippi State Health Plan, poverty,  
19 low educational levels, large minority groups, limited health care  
20 manpower, particularly in rural areas, are conditions that  
21 contribute to racial and ethnic health care disparities. The  
22 Legislature finds that these conditions describe the Mississippi  
23 Delta region more than any other area of the State of Mississippi.

24 (2) The Legislature further finds federal funding for health  
25 insurance for children is limited; therefor, it is imperative that  
26 children in the Delta remain as healthy as possible. In an area  
27 such as the Delta, with its high rates of chronic health problems,  
28 lack of a sufficient number of health care providers and a  
29 population most likely to be uninsured, prevention health services  
30 become increasingly important.

31 (3) Further, the Legislature finds that a school nurse may  
32 be the only consistent source of health services for uninsured

33 school-aged children. School nurses provide health education to  
34 students, staff and parents. They may also be utilized to help  
35 link and enroll uninsured children to the state CHIP program.  
36 However, eleven (11) school districts in the Delta region are  
37 without a school nurse, including the county with the largest  
38 number of school districts in the region. The following action is  
39 requested.

40 **SECTION 2.** For purposes of this act, the terms "Mississippi  
41 Delta region," "Delta region" and "region" are defined as the  
42 western section of the State of Mississippi that lies between the  
43 Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers, encompassing in part or whole the  
44 counties of Bolivar, Carroll, Claiborne, Coahoma, Holmes,  
45 Humphreys, Issaquena, Jefferson, Leflore, Panola, Quitman,  
46 Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Warren, Washington and  
47 Yazoo.

48 **SECTION 3.** In order to maximize the benefits of the  
49 Mississippi Children's Health Insurance Program established under  
50 Chapter 86, Title 71, Mississippi Code of 1972, and Medicaid in  
51 the Mississippi Delta region, the Legislature shall provide such  
52 funds that may be necessary to fully fund the Children's Health  
53 Insurance Program and Medicaid programs.

54 **SECTION 4.** The Governor may require the Division of Medicaid  
55 or any other appropriate agency to apply for grants from  
56 organizations such as the Robert Woods Johnson Foundation and  
57 other similar funding sources in order to secure funding for the  
58 purpose of aggressively marketing the Children's Health Insurance  
59 Program in the Delta region.

60 **SECTION 5.** The State Department of Health shall develop a  
61 system that supports preventive health care measures throughout  
62 the Delta region by requiring local school districts to  
63 demonstrate attempts made by the district to employ a school nurse  
64 which demonstrate an understanding on the part of school district  
65 officials of the need and importance of preventive health

66 services. Acceptable evidence of attempts to hire a school nurse  
67 include, but are not necessarily limited to: exploration of  
68 funding sources and options; submission of grant applications;  
69 requests for technical assistance from the State Department of  
70 Education and other sources; and collaboration with other  
71 districts or organizations for the employment of a school nurse.

72 **SECTION 6.** (1) The State Department of Health shall  
73 develop a means to ensure that annual physicals are provided, free  
74 of charge, to all students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in the  
75 public schools in the Delta region. However, no child may be  
76 required to undergo any physical examination if the child's parent  
77 objects on the grounds that such physical examination is contrary  
78 to his sincerely held religious beliefs.

79 (2) The department shall solicit funding from any available  
80 source for the purposes of providing the physical examinations  
81 required under this section.

82 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
83 and after July 1, 2007.