SENATE BILL NO. 3024  
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE UNIVERSITY OF MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL CENTER TO CREATE A CENTER OF EXCELLENCE TO PROVIDE CARE FOR ABUSED AND NEGLECTED CHILDREN AT THE BLAIR E. BATSON HOSPITAL FOR CHILDREN IN JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI; TO AUTHORIZE THE CENTER TO CONDUCT MAJOR RESEARCH INITIATIVES IN CHILD MALTREATMENT AND CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND TELEMEDICINE CONSULTATIONS; TO CREATE A CHILD ABUSE REFERRAL AND EXAMINATION (CARE) CLINIC FUND FOR THE TRANSFER OF FUNDS RETURNED TO THE STATE BY THE MISSISSIPPI CHILDREN'S JUSTICE CENTER TO BE APPROPRIATED BY THE LEGISLATURE FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE CENTER; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The University of Mississippi Medical Center in collaboration with the Mississippi Department of Human Services and the Office of the Attorney General is authorized and empowered to establish a Center of Excellence (Center), to provide care for abused and neglected children at the Blair E. Batson Hospital for Children located in Jackson, Mississippi, where suspected victims of child maltreatment referred by the Department of Human Services or law enforcement will receive comprehensive physical examinations conducted by medical professionals who specialize in child maltreatment. The University of Mississippi Medical Center shall promulgate such policies as may be necessary and desirable to carry out the programs of the Center. The Center shall serve as a resource for the assessment, investigation and prosecution of child maltreatment. The Center shall work in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, the Mississippi Department of Human Services and other such state agencies and entities that provide services to children, to ensure that CARE Clinic services are provided in a uniform fashion throughout the state.

(2) The Department of Pediatrics may use the Center for educational and outreach programs, telemedicine consultations, to
develop satellite clinics in other locations in the state in cooperation with the local community or private hospital when applicable, and to conduct major research initiatives in child maltreatment.

(3) The Center of Excellence shall provide services to maltreated children and comply with national certification standards as necessary to provide services to the Department of Human Services, the youth courts, state child advocacy centers, District Attorney's Offices and law enforcement agencies.

(4) There is hereby created in the State Treasury a special fund to be known as the Children's Justice Fund. The State Treasurer shall transfer into said special fund any funds returned to the State Treasury by the MCI WorldCom Settlement by the Mississippi Children's Justice Center pursuant to agreement with the State Auditor. The University of Mississippi Medical Center shall expend funds pursuant to appropriation therefore by the Legislature for the support and maintenance of the Center. The University of Mississippi Medical Center is authorized to accept any and all grants, donations or matching funds from private, public or federal sources in order to add to, improve and enlarge the physical facilities of the Center and to expend any such funds for the support and maintenance of the Center.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage, and shall stand repealed from and after July 1, 2008.