

By: Representatives Akins, Jones (111th),
Martinson, McBride, Peranich, Stevens,
DuVall, Perkins, Gardner

To: Education

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 1125

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI AUTISM ADVISORY COMMITTEE;
2 TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP AND TERMS OF MEMBERS OF THE ADVISORY
3 COMMITTEE; TO SET FORTH THE DUTIES OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE; AND
4 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 WHEREAS, autism is a complex developmental disability that
6 typically appears during the first three (3) years of life and is
7 part of a group of disorders known as Autism Spectrum Disorders
8 (ASD); and

9 WHEREAS, as of the effective date of this act, at least one
10 (1) in one hundred (100) individuals in the United States is
11 diagnosed with autism, making it more common than the occurrences
12 in our population of pediatric cancer, diabetes and AIDS combined;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, autism impairs a person's ability to communicate and
15 relate to others; is associated with rigid routines and repetitive
16 behaviors, such as obsessively arranging objects or following very
17 specific routines; is four (4) times more likely to strike boys
18 than girls; and occurs in all racial, ethnic and social groups;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, symptoms of the disability can range from very mild
21 to quite severe, and autistic behaviors not only make life
22 difficult for those individuals who suffer from the disability,
23 but also make life hard for their families, health care providers
24 and teachers; and

25 WHEREAS, families coping with this devastating illness are
26 struggling with the state's education and medical systems to
27 adequately educate and treat their children; and



28 WHEREAS, there is no known means to prevent the disability;
29 there are indications that early intervention in an appropriate
30 educational setting for at least two (2) years during the
31 preschool years can result in significant improvements for many
32 young children with the disorder; and

33 WHEREAS, statistically, there is an extreme under
34 identification of children with autism; and

35 WHEREAS, employment opportunities for individuals with ASD
36 need to be identified; and

37 WHEREAS, the Mississippi Legislature recognizes that
38 strategies for how to best identify, treat, educate, accommodate
39 and employ individuals with autism and assist their families are
40 urgently needed in our state; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

42 **SECTION 1.** The Mississippi Autism Advisory Committee is
43 created to study, make recommendations and develop a strategic
44 plan on how best to educate and train students with autism or ASD
45 to maximize their potential productivity with the workforce. The
46 committee shall meet at least six (6) times annually, and shall
47 develop an annual plan. The report and plan of the committee,
48 which shall be due annually on July 1, 2011, to the Mississippi
49 Legislature, shall detail the progress and problems in creating
50 meaningful progress in the areas of mental health, education,
51 medical and employment for individuals with autism or ASD and
52 their families.

53 **SECTION 2.** Members of the advisory committee shall be
54 composed of the following:

55 (a) Five (5) persons who are the parents of children
56 with autism or ASD, with one (1) such person to be appointed by
57 the Governor, two (2) to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor,
58 and two (2) to be appointed by the Speaker of the House;



59 (b) One (1) person who is a member of the governing
60 body of a school district, to be appointed by the State
61 Superintendent of Public Education;

62 (c) The State Superintendent of Public Education or the
63 Associate Superintendent of the Office of Special Education;

64 (d) One (1) person who is the director of special
65 education services in a school district, to be appointed by the
66 State Superintendent of Public Education;

67 (e) Two (2) members of the Mississippi Special
68 Education Advisory Committee, to be selected by the committee;

69 (f) Two (2) educators or behavioral specialists who
70 work directly with students with ASD, to be appointed by the State
71 Superintendent of Public Education;

72 (g) Two (2) Mississippi licensed psychologists who
73 perform evaluation or consultation with Mississippi schools, to be
74 appointed by the Mississippi Association of Psychology in the
75 Schools;

76 (h) The project director of the Mississippi Parent
77 Training and Information Center;

78 (i) Two (2) persons who are representatives of autism
79 advocacy groups or professionals who work with the advocacy groups
80 and provide services to individuals with autism or ASD, to be
81 appointed by the Executive Director of the Department of Mental
82 Health;

83 (j) One (1) person who is a representative of the State
84 Department of Mental Health, to be appointed by the executive
85 director of the department;

86 (k) One (1) person who is a representative of a private
87 mental health facility who provides services to youth with ASD, to
88 be appointed by the Executive Director of the State Department of
89 Mental Health;

90 (l) One (1) person who is a representative of the
91 University of Mississippi Medical Center and who provides medical



92 or other services to individuals with autism or ASD, to be
93 appointed by the Vice Chancellor of the University of Mississippi
94 Medical Center;

95 (m) Two (2) persons who are working in private industry
96 whose business has the potential to employ individuals with
97 autism, to be appointed by the Governor;

98 (n) One (1) person who is a Transition Specialist, to
99 be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Education;

100 (o) One (1) representative of the T.K. Martin Center,
101 to be appointed by the Director of the T.K. Martin Center;

102 (p) One (1) representative of the Mississippi
103 Department of Rehabilitation Services;

104 (q) Two (2) persons who are licensed therapists, to be
105 appointed by the President of the Mississippi Speech Language and
106 Hearing Association;

107 (r) One (1) person who is a representative of the
108 Mississippi Department of Insurance, to be appointed by the
109 commissioner; and

110 (s) One (1) person who is a representative of the
111 Mississippi Department of Human Services, to be appointed by the
112 director of the department.

113 **SECTION 3.** (1) The advisory committee shall:

114 (a) Review the recommendations of the Caring for
115 Individuals with Autism Task Force of 2007;

116 (b) Evaluate, study and identify any and all current
117 relevant information and make legislative recommendations
118 regarding the development and implementation of a continuum of
119 educational and medical services for individuals with autism or
120 ASD; and

121 (c) File a report with those standing committees of the
122 Mississippi Legislature and present the report to those state
123 agencies having jurisdiction over specific recommendations of the
124 task force, not later than July 1 of each year.



125 (2) The advisory committee shall hold its first meeting not
126 later than April 1, 2011, with the date, time and location of the
127 meeting to be designated by the Executive Director of the
128 Department of Mental Health. At that first meeting, the advisory
129 committee shall elect from among its membership a chairman, vice
130 chairman and any other officers determined to be necessary, and
131 shall set the date, time and location of its next meeting.

132 (3) The terms of advisory committee members shall run for
133 two (2) years, concurrent with the term of members of the
134 Mississippi Congressional Delegation elected to the United States
135 House of Representatives.

136 (4) The State Department of Mental Health shall provide the
137 staff and other support necessary for the Mississippi Autism
138 Advisory Committee to perform its duties.

139 (5) Members of the advisory committee shall serve without
140 compensation in the form of a per diem or any other expense for
141 service on the committee.

142 **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
143 and after its passage.

