

By: Representative Barker

To: Agriculture

HOUSE BILL NO. 828

1 AN ACT TO CREATE AN INTERAGENCY FARM TO SCHOOL COUNCIL TO
2 FACILITATE THE PROCUREMENT AND USE OF LOCALLY GROWN AND LOCALLY RAISED
3 AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN SCHOOL MEALS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF
4 FOOD SERVED IN SCHOOLS AND TO SUPPORT THE STATE ECONOMY BY GENERATING
5 NEW INCOME FOR MISSISSIPPI FARMERS; TO DESCRIBE THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE
6 COUNCIL; TO SET FORTH THE DUTIES AND PURPOSES OF THE COUNCIL; AND FOR
7 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created an Interagency Council on Farm
10 to School, to identify models and methods of promoting farm to school
11 programs in the state in order to improve the availability of healthy,
12 fresh foods in schools and to promote the economic development of
13 Mississippi farmers and food producers.

14 (2) The council shall be composed of the following members:

15 (a) One (1) person who represents the State Department of
16 Education, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public Education;

17 (b) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi Department
18 of Agriculture and Commerce, appointed by the Commissioner of
19 Agriculture and Commerce;

20 (c) One (1) person who represents the State Department of
21 Health, appointed by the State Health Officer;

22 (d) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi State
23 University Extension Program;

24 (e) One (1) person who represents the Alcorn State
25 University Extension Program;

26 (f) One (1) person who represents food service directors in
27 Mississippi public schools, appointed by the State Superintendent of
28 Public Education;



29 (g) One (1) person who represents school health and
30 nutrition education providers in Mississippi, appointed by the State
31 Superintendent of Public Education;

32 (h) One (1) person who represents a nonprofit organization
33 in Mississippi working to promote Farm to School programs, appointed by
34 the Governor;

35 (i) One (1) person who represents a statewide nonprofit
36 organization working to improve food policies in Mississippi, appointed
37 by the Lieutenant Governor;

38 (j) One(1) person who represents Mississippi farmers'
39 markets, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and Commerce;

40 (k) One (1) person who represents farmers that grow food
41 products in Mississippi, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture
42 and Commerce;

43 (l) One (1) person who represents fruit and vegetable
44 growers in Mississippi, appointed by the Mississippi Fruit and Vegetable
45 Growers Association;

46 (m) One (1) person who represents poultry producers in
47 Mississippi, appointed by the President of the Mississippi Poultry
48 Association;

49 (n) One (1) person who represents catfish or other seafood
50 purveyors in Mississippi, appointed by the Commissioner of the
51 Department of Agriculture and Commerce;

52 (o) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi Farm
53 Bureau Federation; and

54 (p) One (1) person who represents Mississippi parents,
55 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

56 (3) In appointing members of the council, the appointing
57 authority shall ensure that the members reflect the diversity of this
58 state, with members representing rural areas, urban areas and different
59 geographical regions of the state.

60 (4) The council is charged with facilitating the creation and
61 growth of farm to school programs in communities throughout the State of



62 Mississippi through studying, recommending and administering best
63 practices for creating farm to school programs. This can be
64 accomplished with actions including but not limited to:

65 (a) Creating and administering an assessment or survey
66 designed to evaluate what specific programs or efforts would be the most
67 effective in increasing the number of farm to school programs in the
68 State of Mississippi;

69 (b) Helping to develop and expand local pilot farm to school
70 programs in Mississippi;

71 (c) Notifying and assisting interested schools, farms, and
72 community organizations in applying for funding sources and grants
73 related to supporting and decreasing the cost of purchasing locally
74 grown and locally raised agricultural products to serve in school meals;

75 (d) Assisting Mississippi farmers in marketing and building
76 commercial relationships with food service directors in schools;

77 (e) Developing or administering training programs for
78 Mississippi farmers related to marketing crops, food safety, processing
79 crops, business management, liability and risk management, and any other
80 topics deemed appropriate by the council;

81 (f) Working with the Mississippi Department of Education
82 Office of Child Nutrition to assist school food service directors in
83 creating and amending school procedures, procurement forms, proper
84 handling, preparing and storing procedures in order to facilitate the
85 purchase of locally grown and locally raised agricultural products to be
86 served in school meals;

87 (g) Developing or assisting an organization in developing a
88 website that lists schools and farmers interested in participating in
89 farm to school programs, promotes farm to school events and programs
90 throughout the state and promotes communication and sales between
91 Mississippi farmers and schools; and

92 (h) Encouraging schools, community organizations,
93 restaurants, grocery retail stores and other local organizations and
94 businesses to purchase more locally grown and locally raised



95 agricultural products to serve or sell through their businesses in order
96 to support and increase local farmers' capacity to grow and produce food
97 for commercial purposes.

98 (5) The council should hold its first meeting no later than
99 August 1, 2012, with the date, time and location of this first meeting
100 to be determined jointly by the members serving on the council. At the
101 first meeting, the council shall elect a chairman, vice chairman, and
102 any other officers deemed necessary, from its members. The council
103 shall meet periodically but no less than four (4) times per year.

104 (6) Members of the council shall serve without compensation or
105 reimbursement for their expenses related to participating in the
106 council, and the council shall function without appropriations or state
107 funds. However, the council can accept funds that may be offered as
108 financial grants from public or private sources. The Mississippi State
109 Legislature and any department, division, board, bureau, commission or
110 agency of the state, or of any political subdivision thereof, shall
111 provide, at the request of the chair of the council, such facilities,
112 assistance and data as will enable the council to carry out its duties.

113 (7) The council shall report its progress and findings to the
114 Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the
115 Agriculture Committees of the House of Representatives and the Senate,
116 the Public Health and Human Services Committee of the House of
117 Representatives, the Public Health and Welfare Committee of the Senate,
118 or any successor committees, on or before June 1, 2013, and once
119 annually in each following year in which the council is convened.

120 (8) The provisions of this section shall stand repealed from and
121 after July 1, 2015.

122 **SECTION 2.** For purposes of this act, the following terms shall
123 have the meanings herein ascribed unless the context clearly indicates
124 otherwise:

125 (a) "Council" means the Interagency Farm to School Council
126 created in Section 1 of this act.



127 (b) "Farm to school program" means any commercial
128 relationship where a school purchases locally grown or locally raised
129 agricultural products to serve in school meals and can include
130 educational programs for students on local agriculture and nutrition;

131 (c) "Locally grown or locally raised agricultural products"
132 means any food products grown on Mississippi farms or gardens, and
133 includes, but is not limited to fruits, vegetables, and nuts grown in
134 Mississippi, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, seafood and other aquatic
135 products produced in Mississippi, and products processed into
136 value-added products that are grown or produced in Mississippi;

137 (d) "School" means any K-12 accredited public or private
138 institution for learning and also includes public and private
139 preschools.

140 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and
141 after its passage.

