

By: Representatives Barker, Eaton, Bell,
Pigott, Sullivan, Whittington

To: Agriculture

HOUSE BILL NO. 718
(As Sent to Governor)

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

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

9 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created an Interagency Farm to
10 School Council, to identify models and methods of promoting farm
11 to school programs in the state in order to improve the
12 availability of healthy, fresh foods in schools and to promote the
13 economic development of 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
16 of Education, appointed by the State Superintendent of Public
17 Education;

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



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

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

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

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

30 (g) One (1) person who represents a nonprofit
31 organization in Mississippi working to promote farm to school
32 programs, appointed by the Commissioner of Agriculture and
33 Commerce;

34 (h) One (1) person who represents poultry producers in
35 Mississippi, appointed by the President of the Mississippi Poultry
36 Association;

37 (i) One (1) person who represents the Mississippi Farm
38 Bureau Federation.

39 (3) In appointing members of the council, the appointing
40 authority shall ensure that the members reflect the diversity of
41 this state, with members representing rural areas, urban areas and
42 different geographical regions of the state.

43 (4) The council is charged with facilitating the creation
44 and growth of farm to school programs in communities throughout
45 the State of Mississippi through studying, recommending and



46 administering best practices for creating farm to school programs.
47 This can be accomplished with actions including, but not limited
48 to:

49 (a) Creating and administering an assessment or survey
50 designed to evaluate what specific programs or efforts would be
51 the most effective in increasing the number of farm to school
52 programs in the State of Mississippi;

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

55 (c) Notifying and assisting interested schools, farms,
56 and community organizations in applying for funding sources and
57 grants related to supporting and decreasing the cost of purchasing
58 locally grown and locally raised agricultural products to serve in
59 school meals;

60 (d) Assisting Mississippi farmers in marketing and
61 building commercial relationships with food service directors in
62 schools;

63 (e) Developing or administering training programs for
64 Mississippi farmers related to marketing crops, food safety,
65 processing crops, business management, liability and risk
66 management, and any other topics deemed appropriate by the
67 council;

68 (f) Working with the Mississippi Department of
69 Education Office of Child Nutrition to assist school food service
70 directors in creating and amending school procedures, procurement



71 forms, proper handling, preparing and storing procedures in order
72 to facilitate the purchase of locally grown and locally raised
73 agricultural products to be served in school meals;

74 (g) Developing or assisting an organization in
75 developing a website that lists schools and farmers interested in
76 participating in farm to school programs, promotes farm to school
77 events and programs throughout the state and promotes
78 communication and sales between Mississippi farmers and schools;
79 and

80 (h) Encouraging schools, community organizations,
81 restaurants, grocery retail stores and other local organizations
82 and businesses to purchase more locally grown and locally raised
83 agricultural products to serve or sell through their businesses in
84 order to support and increase local farmers' capacity to grow and
85 produce food for commercial purposes.

86 (5) The council should hold its first meeting no later than
87 August 1, 2013, with the date, time and location of this first
88 meeting to be determined jointly by the members serving on the
89 council. At the first meeting, the council shall elect a
90 chairman, vice chairman, and any other officers deemed necessary,
91 from its members. The council shall meet periodically but no less
92 than four (4) times per year.

93 (6) Members of the council shall serve without compensation
94 or reimbursement for their expenses related to participating in
95 the council, and the council shall function without appropriations



96 or state funds. However, the council can accept funds that may be
97 offered as financial grants from public or private sources. The
98 Mississippi State Legislature and any department, division, board,
99 bureau, commission or agency of the state, or of any political
100 subdivision thereof, may provide, at the request of the chair of
101 the council, such facilities, assistance and data as will enable
102 the council to carry out its duties.

103 (7) The council shall report its progress and findings to
104 the Education Committees of the House of Representatives and the
105 Senate, the Agriculture Committees of the House of Representatives
106 and the Senate, the Public Health and Human Services Committee of
107 the House of Representatives, the Public Health and Welfare
108 Committee of the Senate, or any successor committees, on or before
109 January 1, 2015, and once annually in each following year in which
110 the council is convened.

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

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

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

118 (b) "Farm to school program" means any commercial
119 relationship where a school purchases locally grown or locally
120 raised agricultural products to serve in school meals and can



121 include educational programs for students on local agriculture and
122 nutrition;

123 (c) "Locally grown or locally raised agricultural
124 products" means any food products grown on Mississippi farms or
125 gardens, and includes, but is not limited to, fruits, vegetables,
126 and nuts grown in Mississippi, meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish,
127 seafood and other aquatic products produced in Mississippi, and
128 products processed into value-added products that are grown or
129 produced in Mississippi;

130 (d) "School" means any K-12 accredited public or
131 private institution for learning and also includes public and
132 private preschools.

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

