

By: Representative Bain

To: Education;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 762

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A PILOT  
3 PROGRAM IN ALCORN COUNTY FOR PREKINDERGARTEN-AGE CHILDREN  
4 CONTINGENT UPON APPROPRIATIONS FOR THAT PURPOSE; AND FOR RELATED  
5 PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-21-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
8 amended as follows:

9 37-21-51. (1) As used in Sections 37-21-51 through  
10 37-21-55, the term "preschool or prekindergarten children" means  
11 any children who have not entered kindergarten.

12 (2) To ensure that all children have access to quality early  
13 childhood education and development services, the Legislature  
14 finds and declares the following:

15 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their  
16 young preschool children;

17 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist and educate  
18 parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of  
19 young preschool children; and



20 (c) There is a need to explore innovative approaches  
21 and strategies for aiding parents and families in the education  
22 and development of young preschool children.

23 (3) (a) This subsection shall be known and may be cited as  
24 the "Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2007."

25 (b) The Mississippi Department of Human Services shall  
26 implement a voluntary early care and education grant program,  
27 which shall be a collaboration among the entities providing  
28 prekindergarten programs including Head Start, licensed child care  
29 facilities and licensed public, parochial and private school  
30 prekindergarten programs. Enrollment in the preschool or  
31 prekindergarten program shall be coordinated with the Head Start  
32 agencies in the local areas and shall not be permitted to cause a  
33 reduction in children served by the Head Start program. Under  
34 this program, eligible entities may submit an application for  
35 funds to (i) defray the cost of additional teaching staff,  
36 appropriate educational materials and equipment and to improve the  
37 quality of educational experiences offered to four-year-old  
38 children in existing licensed early care and education programs,  
39 and/or to (ii) extend developmentally appropriate education  
40 services at such existing licensed programs currently serving  
41 four-year-old children to include practices of high quality  
42 instruction, and to (iii) administer, implement, monitor and  
43 evaluate the programs. Grant funds shall be provided on a local



44 entity matching fund basis to be determined by the Department of  
45 Human Services.

46 (c) The Department of Human Services shall contract  
47 with an appropriate early care and education program entity to  
48 serve as the fiscal agent for the program. All grant applicants  
49 shall be required to collaborate with other early care and  
50 education programs, provide a local community match to the grant  
51 award, designate one (1) entity as fiscal agent for the grant, and  
52 meet teacher qualifications.

53 (d) The early care and education program grants shall  
54 be awarded to successful applicants who meet the criteria  
55 developed by a committee appointed by the Governor, consisting of,  
56 but not limited to, representatives of the Mississippi Department  
57 of Human Services Office for Children and Youth, the Mississippi  
58 Head Start Association, the Mississippi Head Start Collaboration  
59 Office, the Mississippi Department of Education, the Mississippi  
60 State Department of Health Child Care Licensure Division and  
61 licensed child care facilities, one (1) of which must have a  
62 majority low-income population, in the state. The committee shall  
63 meet upon call of the Governor and shall organize for business by  
64 electing a chairman. Administrative and clerical support for the  
65 committee shall be provided by the Department of Human Services.  
66 The committee shall establish grant application criteria,  
67 procedures and deadlines. The criteria must include all  
68 conditions prescribed in paragraph (c), and shall include, but not



69 be limited to: voluntary enrollment of children, qualifications  
70 for teachers and assistant teachers, allowed expenses, children  
71 with special needs, use of a research-based curriculum aligned  
72 with the learning objectives/milestones in the Mississippi Early  
73 Learning Guidelines for Four-Year-Old Children, teacher/child  
74 ratios, child care facility licensure requirements, and  
75 collaboration with other early childhood programs.

76 (e) Any teacher, assistant teacher or other employee  
77 whose salary and fringe benefits are paid from early care and  
78 education grants under this act shall not be deemed to be  
79 classified as state or local school district employees and shall  
80 not be eligible for state health insurance benefits or membership  
81 in the Public Employees' Retirement System.

82 (f) Subject to the availability of funds appropriated  
83 therefor, the Department of Human Services shall administer the  
84 implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the early care and  
85 education grant program including the awards and the application  
86 process. The State Department of Education, Office of Reading,  
87 Early Childhood and Language Arts, in partnership with the  
88 Mississippi Department of Human Services, Office for Children and  
89 Youth, shall develop educational criteria regarding research-based  
90 curriculum, the state's early learning guidelines and  
91 developmentally appropriate educational services. Funding shall  
92 be provided subject to appropriation beginning with the 2008  
93 fiscal year. The department shall make an annual report to the



94 Legislature and the Governor regarding the effectiveness of the  
95 program.

96 (4) The State Board of Education shall implement a pilot  
97 program in Alcorn County for four-year-old children beginning with  
98 the 2013-2014 school year, contingent upon the availability of  
99 funds specifically appropriated for that purpose. Each school  
100 district may submit a proposal to conduct the pilot program which  
101 shall be selected for funding based upon a competitive Request for  
102 Proposals (RFP) process from each of the applying school  
103 districts. The RFP shall be developed by an oversight committee  
104 representing the State Department of Education, the Department of  
105 Human Services, the Mississippi Head Start Association, the  
106 Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office and two (2)  
107 representatives from private/parochial child care programs. Grant  
108 criteria shall require collaboration with other programs such as  
109 public school prekindergarten, licensed child care centers, and  
110 Head Start. Contingent upon appropriations, the State Department  
111 of Education shall conduct an evaluation of the preschool pilot  
112 programs and shall submit a report to the Legislature regarding  
113 the effectiveness of the pilot programs annually.

114 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
115 and after July 1, 2013.

