

By: Representative Scott

To: Corrections; Judiciary B

HOUSE BILL NO. 471

1 AN ACT TO CREATE A TASK FORCE TO ADDRESS THE DISPARITY OF
2 AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES IN THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM; TO SPECIFY THE
3 DUTIES OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE
4 TASK FORCE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

5 WHEREAS, more than one (1) in every four (4) black men,
6 twenty-eight and five-tenths percent (28.5%), is expected to be
7 incarcerated in a federal or state prison at some point in his
8 lifetime; and

9 WHEREAS, African-American males between eighteen (18) and
10 twenty-four (24) years of age are eight (8) times more likely than
11 white males to be murdered; and

12 WHEREAS, African-American males make up nearly seventy-five
13 percent (75%) of the total prison population and due to either
14 present or past incarceration are the most socially
15 disenfranchised group of American citizens in the country today;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, a black male born in 1991 has a twenty-nine percent
18 (29%) chance of spending time in prison at some point in his life,



19 but the figure for white males is four percent (4%) and for
20 Hispanics it is sixteen percent (16%); and

21 WHEREAS, in 1954, at the time of the historic *Brown v. Board*
22 *of Education* decision, African Americans constituted about thirty
23 percent (30%) of individuals admitted to federal and state
24 prisons, and that number has increased to over fifty percent
25 (50%); and

26 WHEREAS, there are presently more African-American males in
27 prison than in college, and African-American males make up less
28 than two percent (2%) of our elementary school teachers; and

29 WHEREAS, the number of African-American men in prison must
30 decrease and the number of African-American men in college must
31 increase, and the issue of African-American males dropping out of
32 elementary and high schools must be addressed; NOW, THEREFORE,

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

34 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created a task force to address the
35 disparity of African-American males in the judicial system, and
36 the duties of the task force shall be as follows:

37 (a) Review data regarding the current number of
38 African-American males who are incarcerated in this state and the
39 education level and dropout rate of those males;

40 (b) Evaluate current methods that are used by the
41 Department of Education to assist African-American males who are
42 at risk of dropping out of school;



43 (c) Review data regarding early guidance and counseling
44 that is given to young African-American males in regard to
45 obtaining future occupations;

46 (d) Develop best practices for future job skills for
47 African-American males;

48 (e) Review data regarding drug rehabilitation for
49 African-American males;

50 (f) Develop best practices and current methods utilized
51 for drug rehabilitation for African-American males;

52 (g) Develop a program that is dedicated to ensuring
53 college preparation, leadership development, community
54 responsibility and successful life planning for African-American
55 males that will enable them to become certified elementary school
56 teachers in Mississippi's public schools and serve as role models
57 to economically and socially disadvantaged youths; and

58 (h) Evaluate current methods that the state's training
59 school is utilizing to prevent young African-American males who
60 have been adjudicated to the training school from becoming a part
61 of the adult prison system in the future.

62 The task force shall make a report of its findings and
63 recommendations to the Legislature by December 1, 2018, including
64 any recommended legislation.

65 (2) The task force shall be composed of nine (9) members, as
66 follows:



67 (a) Three (3) members of the House of Representatives
68 to be appointed by the Speaker of the House;

69 (b) Three (3) members of the Senate to be appointed by
70 the Lieutenant Governor;

71 (c) The State Superintendent of Education or his
72 designee;

73 (d) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
74 Services or his designee; and

75 (e) The Commissioner of the Department of Corrections
76 or his designee.

77 (3) Legislative appointments shall be made within thirty
78 (30) days after the effective date of this act. Within fifteen
79 (15) days thereafter on a day to be designated jointly by the
80 Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor, the task force
81 shall meet and organize by selecting from its membership a
82 chairman and a vice chairman. The vice chairman shall also serve
83 as secretary and shall be responsible for keeping all records of
84 the task force. A majority of the members of the task force shall
85 constitute a quorum. In the selection of its officers and the
86 adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of
87 a majority of the task force shall be required. All members shall
88 be notified in writing of all meetings, and those notices shall be
89 mailed at least fifteen (15) days before the date on which a
90 meeting is to be held.



91 (4) The members of the task force who are not legislators
92 shall be compensated at the per diem rate authorized by Section
93 25-3-69 and shall be reimbursed in accordance with Section 25-3-41
94 for mileage and actual expenses incurred in the performance of
95 their duties. Legislative members of the task force shall be paid
96 from the contingent expense funds of their respective houses in
97 the same manner as provided for committee meetings when the
98 Legislature is not in session. However, no per diem or expenses
99 for attending meetings of the task force will be paid to
100 legislative members of the task force while the Legislature is in
101 session. No task force member may incur per diem, travel or other
102 expenses unless previously authorized by vote, at a meeting of the
103 task force, which action shall be recorded in the official minutes
104 of the meeting. The nonlegislative members shall be paid from any
105 funds made available to the task force for that purpose.

106 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
107 and after July 1, 2018.

