

By: Senator(s) Boyd

To: Public Health and
Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2167
(As Passed the Senate)

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EARLY
2 INTERVENTION TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE IDEA PART C EARLY
3 INTERVENTION SYSTEM IN MISSISSIPPI AND MISSISSIPPI'S LAWS
4 REGARDING EARLY INTERVENTION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE GOALS AND
5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE FOR THE MEMBERSHIP
6 OF THE TASK FORCE; TO REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP AND REPORT
7 ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PROPOSED LEGISLATION TO THE
8 LEGISLATURE ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2023; AND FOR RELATED
9 PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby established the "Early
12 Intervention Task Force to Study the IDEA Part C Early
13 Intervention System in Mississippi and Mississippi's Laws
14 Regarding Early Intervention." The goal of the task force shall
15 be to develop a recommendation to the Legislature on reforming the
16 current early intervention system and laws in Mississippi, with a
17 goal of increasing access to services for children from birth to
18 age three (3) through a robust First Steps Early Intervention
19 Program. The task force may propose legislation and rule changes
20 based upon its recommendation.

21 (2) The members of the task force shall be as follows:



22 (a) The Chairmen of the Public Health Committees of the
23 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,
24 or his or her designee from their respective committee membership;

25 (b) The Chairmen of the Appropriations Committees of
26 the Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of
27 Representatives, or his or her designee from their respective
28 committee membership;

29 (c) One (1) member of the Mississippi State Senate, to
30 be named by the Lieutenant Governor; and one (1) member of the
31 Mississippi House of Representatives, to be named by the Speaker
32 of the House of Representatives, who are interested in early
33 intervention issues;

34 (d) The State Health Officer of the Mississippi
35 Department of Health or a designated deputy;

36 (e) One (1) designee that is a direct service provider
37 in the First Steps Early Intervention Program, to be named by the
38 State Health Officer;

39 (f) One (1) faculty member from the Social Science
40 Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University, to be
41 named by the Director of the SSRC;

42 (g) One (1) developmental-behavioral pediatrician with
43 expertise in early childhood systems building, to be named by the
44 Vice Chancellor of the University of Mississippi Medical Center;

45 (h) One (1) general pediatrician, to be named by the
46 Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;



47 (i) One (1) clinical psychologist with expertise in
48 social-emotional health of infants and toddlers, to be named by
49 the Vice Chancellor of the University of Mississippi Medical
50 Center;

51 (j) One (1) school psychologist, to be named by the
52 Mississippi Association of Psychologists in the Schools;

53 (k) One (1) early interventionist/development
54 therapist, to be named by the State Health Officer;

55 (l) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Early
56 Learning Alliance;

57 (m) One (1) family advocacy representative to be
58 appointed by the Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition
59 for Citizens with Disabilities;

60 (n) One (1) parent representative with current
61 experience with early intervention to be appointed by the
62 Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with
63 Disabilities;

64 (o) One (1) faculty member from the College of Health
65 Sciences at Jackson State University, to be named by the president
66 of such university; and

67 (p) One (1) pediatrician, to be named by the
68 Mississippi Region of the National Medical Association.

69 (3) A faculty member from each of the universities within
70 the institutions of higher learning with an early childhood



71 development program or early intervention program may be named by
72 the president of each university to assist the task force.

73 (4) The task force shall meet within forty-five (45) days of
74 the effective date of this act and shall evaluate the current
75 early intervention laws in Mississippi. Specifically, the task
76 force shall:

77 (a) Evaluate early intervention infrastructure in
78 Mississippi and in states with better performance outcomes as
79 compared to Mississippi, study the employment structures of early
80 intervention systems and evaluate eligibility requirements to
81 support serving more children within the early intervention
82 system;

83 (b) Review billing and reimbursement processes and
84 rates for early intervention services in Mississippi and in other
85 states, to ensure a timely receipt of payment to providers;

86 (c) Explore options for an ideal location where early
87 intervention services should be housed to reduce barriers to
88 implementation;

89 (d) Study early intervention service delivery models
90 used in surrounding states, including a university-based hub model
91 and evaluate how this model may impact the training of students
92 and future professionals;

93 (e) Access the efficiency of telemedicine for initial
94 evaluations and therapeutic services deemed clinically
95 appropriate;



96 (f) Explore the benefits of including additional
97 service providers within the early intervention service delivery
98 system;

99 (g) Review the Comprehensive Systems of Personnel
100 Development (CSPD) and the quantity, quality and effectiveness of
101 the early intervention workforce; explore the feasibility of
102 funding a CSPD Coordinator within a state agency to assist in
103 ensuring all early intervention providers meet competencies for
104 serving young children;

105 (h) Explore the feasibility of developing an Office of
106 Early Childhood and provide recommendations on this approach; and

107 (i) Review any other matters related to the above
108 issues or related to early intervention services.

109 (5) The task force may request the assistance of the
110 Mississippi Department of Health, the Social Sciences Research
111 Center at Mississippi State University, the Mississippi Early
112 Learning Alliance or any other related entity or organization with
113 expertise in early intervention services.

114 (6) The members of the task force shall elect a Chair from
115 among the members. The task force shall develop and report its
116 findings and recommendations for proposed legislation to the
117 Legislature and proposed rule changes to the Mississippi
118 Department of Health on or before December 1, 2023. A quorum of
119 the membership shall be required to approve any final report and
120 recommendation. Members of the task force shall be reimbursed for



121 necessary travel expense in the same manner as public employees
122 are reimbursed for official duties from any available funds and
123 members of the Legislature shall be reimbursed in the same manner
124 as for attending out-of-session committee meetings.

125 (7) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
126 Evaluation and Expenditure Review shall provide necessary clerical
127 support for the meetings of the task force and the preparation of
128 the report. Proposed legislation shall be prepared by the
129 Legislative Services Offices of the Senate and House as requested.

130 (8) The task force shall be dissolved upon presentation of
131 its report.

132 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
133 and after its passage.

