

By: Senator(s) Boyd

To: Public Health and
Welfare; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2167
(As Sent to Governor)

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) The Chairmen of the Education Committees of the
30 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,
31 or his or her designee from their respective committee membership;

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

37 (e) The State Health Officer of the Mississippi
38 Department of Health or a designated deputy;

39 (f) One (1) designee that is a direct service provider
40 in the First Steps Early Intervention Program, to be named by the
41 State Health Officer;

42 (g) One (1) faculty member from the Social Science
43 Research Center (SSRC) at Mississippi State University, to be
44 named by the Director of the SSRC;



45 (h) One (1) developmental-behavioral pediatrician with
46 expertise in early childhood systems building, to be named by the
47 Vice Chancellor of the University of Mississippi Medical Center;

48 (i) One (1) general pediatrician, to be named by the
49 Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics;

50 (j) One (1) clinical psychologist with expertise in
51 social-emotional health of infants and toddlers, to be named by
52 the Vice Chancellor of the University of Mississippi Medical
53 Center;

54 (k) One (1) school psychologist, to be named by the
55 Mississippi Association of Psychologists in the Schools;

56 (l) One (1) early interventionist/development
57 therapist, to be named by the State Health Officer;

58 (m) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Early
59 Learning Alliance;

60 (n) One (1) family advocacy representative to be
61 appointed by the Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition
62 for Citizens with Disabilities;

63 (o) One (1) parent representative with current
64 experience with early intervention to be appointed by the
65 Executive Director of the Mississippi Coalition for Citizens with
66 Disabilities;

67 (p) One (1) faculty member from the College of Health
68 Sciences at Jackson State University, to be named by the president
69 of such university; and



70 (q) One (1) pediatrician, to be named by the
71 Mississippi Region of the National Medical Association.

72 (3) A faculty member from each of the universities within
73 the institutions of higher learning with an early childhood
74 development program or early intervention program may be named by
75 the president of each university to assist the task force.

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

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

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

89 (c) Explore options for an ideal location where early
90 intervention services should be housed to reduce barriers to
91 implementation;

92 (d) Study early intervention service delivery models
93 used in surrounding states, including a university-based hub model



94 and evaluate how this model may impact the training of students
95 and future professionals;

96 (e) Access the efficiency of telemedicine for initial
97 evaluations and therapeutic services deemed clinically
98 appropriate;

99 (f) Explore the benefits of including additional
100 service providers within the early intervention service delivery
101 system;

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

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

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

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

117 (6) The members of the task force shall elect a Chair from
118 among the members. The task force shall develop and report its



119 findings and recommendations for proposed legislation to the
120 Legislature and proposed rule changes to the Mississippi
121 Department of Health on or before December 1, 2023. A quorum of
122 the membership shall be required to approve any final report and
123 recommendation. Members of the task force shall be reimbursed for
124 necessary travel expense in the same manner as public employees
125 are reimbursed for official duties from any available funds and
126 members of the Legislature shall be reimbursed in the same manner
127 as for attending out-of-session committee meetings.

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

133 (8) The task force shall be dissolved upon presentation of
134 its report.

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

