

By: Senator(s) Boyd, DeLano, McLendon

To: Universities and Colleges

SENATE BILL NO. 2725

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
 2 EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE" CREATED TO EXAMINE THE EFFICIENCY AND
 3 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN MISSISSIPPI, AS
 4 IT RELATES TO THE UNIVERSITIES' COLLECTIVE MISSION OF ENROLLING
 5 AND GRADUATING MORE DEGREED MISSISSIPPIANS AND RETAINING THEM IN
 6 THE STATE, AND ANTICIPATED NATIONWIDE CHALLENGES WITH REGARD TO
 7 DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS AND A PROJECTED OVERALL DECLINE IN ENROLLMENT;
 8 TO REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
 9 LEGISLATURE ON CHANGES TO POLICY AND LAWS IN MISSISSIPPI WITH A
 10 GOAL OF INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
 11 IN THE STATE; TO SET THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE
 12 FOR OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED THERETO, INCLUDING PER DIEM AND
 13 VOTING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby established the "Mississippi
 16 University System Efficiency Task Force" created to examine the
 17 efficiency and effectiveness of the public university system in
 18 Mississippi, as it relates to the universities' collective mission
 19 of enrolling and graduating more degreed Mississippians and
 20 retaining them in the state, and anticipated nationwide challenges
 21 with regard to demographic shifts and a projected overall decline
 22 in enrollment. The task force shall develop recommendations to
 23 the Legislature on changes to policy and laws in Mississippi with



24 a goal of increasing the efficiency of the public university
25 system in Mississippi, planning for future demographic shifts and
26 possible enrollment declines at all institutions and the state
27 level, and continuing progression toward the goal of increasing
28 the post-secondary education attainment level in the state.

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

30 (a) The Chairmen of the Universities and Colleges
31 Committees of the Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of
32 Representatives, or their designees from their respective
33 committee membership;

34 (b) The Chairmen of the Appropriation Committees of the
35 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,
36 or their designees from their respective committee membership;

37 (c) The Chairmen of the Finance Committee of the
38 Mississippi Senate and the Ways and Means Committee of the
39 Mississippi House of Representatives, or their designees from
40 their respective committee membership;

41 (d) The Director of the University Research Center and
42 State Economist, or his or her designee;

43 (e) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree
44 from one (1) of the four (4) public regional universities in
45 Mississippi appointed by the Governor. Such designee shall have
46 significant business or other professional experience and shall be
47 a resident of the State of Mississippi;



48 (f) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree
49 from one (1) of the three (3) public historically black
50 universities in Mississippi appointed by the Governor. Such
51 designee shall have significant business or other professional
52 experience and shall be a resident of the State of Mississippi;
53 and

54 (g) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree
55 from one (1) of the four (4) public research universities in
56 Mississippi appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Such designee
57 shall have significant business or other professional experience
58 and shall be a resident of the State of Mississippi.

59 (3) The task force shall meet within forty-five (45) days of
60 the effective date of this act and shall evaluate the current
61 data, resources, and laws and policies of the State of
62 Mississippi. Specifically, the task force shall:

63 (a) Evaluate the current funding formula and
64 appropriations process for the Mississippi public university
65 system, particularly as it relates to enrollment and graduation
66 rates;

67 (b) Evaluate the process of developing physical plant
68 plans for Mississippi's public universities, including the use of
69 enrollment data and projections in such plans and the Mississippi
70 Institution of Higher Learning's role in determining collective
71 system needs requiring additional state resources;



72 (c) Collect and analyze publicly available data and
73 statistics related to enrollment and graduation rates and
74 projections, with particular focus on the enrollment and
75 graduation rates of Mississippi residents, as well as other data
76 relating to shifting demographics, at all of Mississippi's public
77 universities;

78 (d) Examine any existing or developing plans, both on
79 an individual public university and university system basis, to
80 address projected demographic shifts and enrollment declines;

81 (e) Evaluate successful strategies for addressing
82 challenges in efficiency and enrollment in the Mississippi
83 university system and across the nation, including current
84 partnerships across the system; and

85 (f) Review any other matters related to the above
86 issues or the efficiency and effectiveness of the public
87 university system in Mississippi.

88 (4) The task force may request the assistance of the
89 Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and any other related
90 agency, entity or organization with expertise in higher education,
91 demographic, enrollment and other issues.

92 (5) The Chairmen of the Universities and Colleges Committees
93 in the Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of Representatives
94 shall call the first meeting. The members of the task force shall
95 elect a Chair or co-Chairs from among the members at its first
96 meeting. The task force shall develop and report its findings and



97 recommendations to the Mississippi Legislature on or before
98 October 1, 2024. A majority of the membership shall be required
99 to approve any final report and recommendation. Meetings of the
100 task force shall be held at the State Capitol; however, if it is
101 not feasible for the task force to hold an in-person meeting, the
102 task force may convene utilizing an online meeting platform that
103 is accessible for viewing by the public.

104 (6) Subject to appropriations, members of the task force who
105 are not state employees may be compensated at the per diem rate
106 authorized by Section 25-3-69 and reimbursed in accordance with
107 Section 25-3-41 for mileage and actual expenses incurred in the
108 performance of their duties. However, task force members may not
109 incur per diem, travel or other expenses unless previously
110 authorized by vote at a meeting of the task force, which action
111 must be recorded in the official minutes of the meeting. Per diem
112 and expense payments made pursuant to this subsection may be paid
113 from any funds made available to the task force for that purpose.

114 (7) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
115 Evaluation and Expenditure Review shall provide necessary clerical
116 support for the meetings of the task force and the preparation of
117 the report.

118 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
119 and after July 1, 2024.

