

By: Representative Scott

To: Public Health and Human
Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 379

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY COMMISSION; TO
2 PROVIDE THAT THE COMMISSION IS CHARGED WITH COORDINATING AND
3 STREAMLINING THE STATE'S EFFORTS TO PROVIDE NEEDED SERVICES TO
4 MISSISSIPPI'S CHILDREN; TO PROVIDE THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON THE
5 COMMISSION; TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR
6 AND CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATURE NOT LATER THAN DECEMBER
7 1 OF EACH YEAR; TO REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO ADOPT INTERNAL
8 ORGANIZATIONAL PROCEDURES NECESSARY FOR THE EFFICIENT OPERATION OF
9 THE COMMISSION; TO AUTHORIZE THE COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH
10 SUBCOMMITTEES FOR CONDUCTING SPECIFIC PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES; TO
11 REQUIRE THE COMMISSION TO CREATE RESOURCE MAPS OF ALL FUNDS
12 RECEIVED FOR PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT SUPPORT CHILDREN IN THIS
13 STATE, TO ASSESS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THOSE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES
14 AND TO DETERMINE THE FEASIBILITY OF MERGING, CONTINUING OR
15 DISCONTINUING THOSE PROGRAMS OR SERVICES; TO REQUIRE ALL AGENCIES,
16 DEPARTMENTS, INSTITUTIONS AND POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS OF THE STATE
17 THAT PROVIDE PROGRAMS OR SERVICES TO CHILDREN IN THIS STATE TO
18 CREATE AN ITEMIZED LIST OF THOSE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES, AND TO
19 COOPERATE WITH THE COMMISSION; TO PROVIDE THAT THE ITEMIZED LISTS
20 OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES SHALL BE PROVIDED TO THE JOHN C. STENNIS
21 INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY NOT LATER
22 THAN SEPTEMBER 1 OF EACH YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE STENNIS
23 INSTITUTE SHALL COMPILE THE INFORMATION IN THOSE LISTS INTO ONE
24 DOCUMENT, AND PROVIDE THE COMPILED INFORMATION TO THE COMMISSION
25 AND CERTAIN COMMITTEES OF THE LEGISLATURE EACH YEAR; TO REQUIRE
26 THE COMMISSION TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION RECEIVED AND PREPARED BY
27 IT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

29 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created the Children's Advocacy
30 Commission, which is charged with coordinating and streamlining



31 the state's efforts to provide needed services to Mississippi's
32 children. The commission shall focus on a broad range of issues
33 and challenges, including fighting abuse and neglect, promoting
34 foster care and adoption, and raising public awareness of
35 children's issues.

36 (2) The commission shall have seventeen (17) members,
37 consisting of the following:

38 (a) One (1) person appointed by the Governor who has
39 demonstrated a strong commitment to and understanding of the
40 challenges and issues affecting Mississippi's children;

41 (b) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
42 Services, or his or her designee;

43 (c) A representative from a Mississippi public school
44 program, appointed by the Speaker of the House;

45 (d) A representative from a Mississippi private school
46 program, appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

47 (e) The Executive Director of the State Department of
48 Health, or his or her designee;

49 (f) The Executive Director of the State Department of
50 Mental Health, or his or her designee;

51 (g) The Commissioner of Higher Education, or his or her
52 designee;

53 (h) The Executive Director of the State Board for
54 Community and Junior Colleges, or his or her designee;



(i) The State Superintendent of Public Education, or his or her designee;

(j) A member of the Mississippi Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors;

(k) A member of the Mississippi School Counselors Association;

(l) A member of the Mississippi Community and Junior College Counselors Association;

(m) A member of the Mississippi Association of Social Workers;

(n) A member of the Mississippi Association of Marriage and Family Therapists;

(o) A member of the Mississippi Primary Health Care Association;

(p) A member of the Mississippi State Workforce Investment Board; and

(q) A member of the Mississippi Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

(3) The commission shall conduct its first meeting not later than August 1, 2025. During its first meeting, the commission shall choose a chairperson, a vice chairperson and a secretary by majority vote, who shall serve in these positions for twelve (12) months. The commission shall vote on these positions annually. After the commission holds its first meeting, it shall meet at such times and places as determined by its chairperson or



80 a majority of the members of the commission. The commission shall
81 meet and conduct business at least quarterly.

82 The commission shall adopt internal organizational
83 procedures necessary for the efficient operation of the commission
84 and may establish subcommittees for conducting specific programs
85 and activities. The procedures must include duties of officers, a
86 process for selecting officers, duties of subcommittees, quorum
87 requirements for conducting business and policies for any staff.
88 Members of the commission who are agency or department employees
89 shall designate necessary staff of their departments to assist the
90 commission in performing its duties and responsibilities.

91 Meetings of the commission shall be open to the public, and
92 opportunity for public comment must be made available at each
93 meeting. The staff of the commission shall notify all persons who
94 request that notice as to the date, time and place of each
95 meeting.

96 (4) The commission shall have the following duties:

97 (a) Design and oversee an itemized resource mapping of
98 all federal and state funding sources that support the health,
99 safety, permanence, growth, development and education of children
100 in this state from conception through the age of majority;

101 (b) Assess the effectiveness of programs and services
102 provided by agencies, departments, institutions and political
103 subdivisions of the state that receive federal and state funds for
104 the health, safety, permanence, growth, development and education



of children in this state from conception through the age of majority;

(c) Determine the feasibility of merging, continuing or discontinuing the existence of those programs and services provided by agencies, departments, institutions or political subdivisions of the state;

(d) File a report with the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and Human Services Committees of the Mississippi House of Representatives, and the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and Welfare Committees of the Mississippi Senate by December 1 of each year; and

(e) Conduct a meeting with the report to the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and Human Services Committees of the Mississippi House of Representatives, and the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and Welfare Committees of the Mississippi Senate to explain the statewide impact of the report by December 15 of each year.

(5) The resource mapping required by subsection (4) of this section shall provide:

(a) An inventory of all federal and state funding sources that support children in this state;

(b) An inventory of all state, federal or government subsidized services and programs offered to children in this



state, set out by program, target population, geographical region, agency or any other grouping that would assist the commission in determining whether there are overlapping programs that lead to duplication within the state, gaps in service delivery and any administrative inefficiencies generally;

(c) A description of the manner in which the funds are being used within the agencies or organizations, the performance measures in place to assess the use of such funding, the intended outcomes of the programs and services and the actual outcomes of the programs and services;

(d) Government mandates for the use of the funds, if any; and

(e) An inventory of the funds for which the state may be eligible, but is currently not receiving or using, and the reasons why the funds are not being used.

(6) Members of the commission shall receive no compensation for their service on the panel but may receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred while engaged in the official business of the commission.

SECTION 2. (1) All agencies, departments, institutions and political subdivisions of the state that provide programs or services to children in this state shall create an itemized list of the programs and services provided by that agency, department, institution or political subdivision. The itemized list shall provide the following information:



155 (a) A description of the programs and services,
156 categorized by program, target population and geographical region;

157 (b) An itemized resource map of all federal and state
158 funds received for the programs and services;

159 (c) The performance measures used to assess the
160 expenditure of those funds, the intended outcomes of the programs
161 and services and the actual outcomes of the programs and services;

162 (d) Any costs associated with operating the programs
163 and services; and

164 (e) The number of children served by the programs and
165 services.

166 (2) The agencies, departments, institutions and political
167 subdivisions shall provide the itemized lists of the programs and
168 services required by subsection (1) of this section to the John C.
169 Stennis Institute of Government at Mississippi State University
170 not later than September 1 of each year. The Stennis Institute
171 shall compile the information in those lists into one (1)
172 document, organized both by programs and services and by the
173 agencies, departments, institutions and political subdivisions
174 providing the programs and services. The Stennis Institute shall
175 provide the compiled information to the Children's Advocacy
176 Commission not later than November 1 of each year, and shall make
177 the compiled information available to the Chairperson and Vice
178 Chairperson of the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and
179 Human Services Committees of the Mississippi House of



Representatives, and the Appropriations, Education and Public Health and Welfare Committees of the Mississippi Senate not later than December 1 of each year.

(3) All agencies, departments, institutions and political subdivisions of the state shall cooperate with the Children's Advocacy Commission in fulfilling its duties. The information required by this section shall be updated and provided to the Children's Advocacy Commission not later than September 1 of each year.

(4) The Children's Advocacy Commission shall provide the information received by the commission and the information prepared by the commission to the Division of Early Childhood Care and Development of the Department of Human Services in a format that does not identify any individuals.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2025.

