

By: Senator(s) Ferris

To: Education

## SENATE BILL NO. 2618

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT AND  
2 IMPLEMENTATION OF A PREKINDERGARTEN PROGRAM IN MISSISSIPPI; TO  
3 PROVIDE FOR A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE  
4 2000 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 SECTION 1. (1) The Legislature finds that:

7 (a) Studies show that children who attend  
8 prekindergarten have higher academic and social ratings by their  
9 kindergarten teachers and better kindergarten attendance than  
10 children who do not attend prekindergarten;

11 (b) Participation in a high quality prekindergarten  
12 program helps children develop social and preacademic skills that  
13 will help them succeed in kindergarten and throughout their  
14 educational experiences;

15 (c) The Georgia Prekindergarten Program is a model  
16 statewide program established in 1993 to provide a developmentally  
17 appropriate program for four-year-old children, emphasizing growth  
18 in language and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical  
19 development, and personal and social competence, and other  
20 southeastern states have implemented prekindergarten programs  
21 similar to the Georgia Prekindergarten Program.

22 (2) There is hereby created a Task Force to Study the  
23 Development and Implementation of a Prekindergarten Program in  
24 Mississippi. The task force shall make a report of its findings  
25 and recommendations to the Legislature at least thirty (30) days  
26 prior to the beginning of the 2000 Regular Session of the  
27 Legislature for implementation in the 2000-2001 school year.

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29           (3) The task force shall be composed of sixteen (16) members  
30 as follows:

31           (a) The Chairmen of the Senate Education and  
32 Appropriations Committees and two (2) Senators to be appointed by  
33 the President of the Senate;

34           (b) The Chairmen of the House Education and  
35 Appropriations Committees and two (2) members of the House of  
36 Representatives to be appointed by the Speaker;

37           (c) The State Superintendent of Education;

38           (d) The Chairman of the State Board of Education;

39           (e) A local school board member appointed by the State  
40 Superintendent of Education;

41           (f) An elementary principal appointed by the State  
42 Superintendent of Education;

43           (g) A kindergarten teacher employed in a public school,  
44 appointed by the State Superintendent of Education;

45           (h) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Head  
46 Start Association;

47           (i) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the  
48 President of the Senate; and

49           (j) A parent of a preschool-age child appointed by the  
50 Speaker of the House. In the event the Chairman of the Senate of  
51 House Education or Appropriations Committees is unable to attend  
52 any meeting of the task force, the vice-chairman of the respective  
53 committee shall be authorized to attend and vote at such meeting.

54 Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after passage  
55 of this act, and, within fifteen (15) days thereafter on a day to  
56 be designated jointly by the President of the Senate, the Speaker  
57 of the House and the State Superintendent of Education, the task  
58 force shall meet and organize by selecting from its membership a  
59 chairman and a vice-chairmen. The vice-chairmen shall also serve  
60 as secretary and shall be responsible for keeping all records of  
61 the task force. A majority of the members of the task force shall  
62 constitute a quorum. In the selection of its officers and the  
63 adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of  
64 a majority of the task force shall be required. All members shall

65 be notified in writing of all meetings, such notices to be mailed  
66 at least five (5) days prior to the date on which a meeting is to  
67 be held.

68 (3) Members of the task force who are not legislators shall  
69 be compensated at the per diem rate authorized by Section 25-3-69,  
70 Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be reimbursed in accordance  
71 with Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, for mileage and  
72 actual expense incurred in the performance of their duties. Any  
73 member who is also a state employee shall not be eligible to  
74 receive per diem compensation. No task force member may incur per  
75 diem, travel or other expenses unless previously authorized by  
76 vote, at a meeting of the task force, which action shall be  
77 recorded in the official minutes of said meeting. Legislative  
78 members of the committee shall be paid from the contingent expense  
79 funds of their respective houses in the same amounts as provided  
80 for committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session;  
81 however, no per diem or expense for attending meetings of the task  
82 force will be paid while the Legislature is in session.  
83 Non-legislative members shall be paid from any funds made  
84 available to the task force for that purpose.

85 (4) The task force is authorized to accept money from any  
86 source, public or private, to be expended in implementing its  
87 duties under this act.

88 (5) The task force is empowered to hire staff as well as to  
89 utilize clerical and legal staff already employed by the State  
90 Department of Education, the Office of the Governor and the  
91 Legislature and any other staff assistance made available to it.

92 (6) Funding for the task force may be provided from any  
93 funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature to the State  
94 Department of Education for that purpose.

95 (7) Upon presentation of its report to the 2000 Regular  
96 Session, the task force shall be dissolved.

97 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from

98 and after its passage.