

By: Senator(s) Ferris

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2618
(As Passed the Senate)

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

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

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

9 (a) Studies show that children who experience quality
10 comprehensive early childhood services have higher academic and
11 social ratings by their kindergarten teachers and better
12 kindergarten attendance than children who do not;

13 (b) Participation in quality comprehensive early
14 childhood services helps children develop social and pre-academic
15 skills that will help them succeed in kindergarten and throughout
16 their educational experiences;

17 (c) Other southeastern states have implemented
18 pre-kindergarten programs similar to the Georgia Pre-Kindergarten
19 Program for four-year-old children, emphasizing growth in language
20 and literacy, math concepts, science, arts, physical development,
21 and personal and social competence.

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

29 (3) The task force shall be composed of twenty-four (24)
30 members as follows:

31 (a) The Chairmen of the Senate Education and
32 Appropriations Committees and two (2) members of the Senate
33 appointed by 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 of the House;

37 (c) A representative of the Governor;

38 (d) The State Superintendent of Education;

39 (e) The Executive Director of the Department of Health,
40 the state child care licensing agency;

41 (f) The Executive Director of the Department of Human
42 Services, the state Child Care Development Fund agency;

43 (g) Representatives of the early childhood profession:

44 (i) A Head Start director elected by the
45 Mississippi Head Start Association;

46 (ii) A representative from a regulated family
47 child care home network appointed by the Speaker of the House;

48 (iii) A representative from a licensed child care
49 center appointed by the President of the Senate;

50 (iv) A teacher from a public school
51 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

52 (v) A teacher from a private school
53 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the President of the Senate;

54 (vi) A teacher from a half-day church sponsored
55 pre-kindergarten program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

56 (vii) A representative from a university or
57 college early childhood teacher preparation program appointed by
58 the President of the Senate;

59 (viii) A representative of a tribal early
60 childhood program appointed by the Speaker of the House;

61 (ix) A representative of an early childhood

professional organization appointed by the President of the Senate; and

(x) A representative of an advocacy organization appointed by the Speaker of the House.

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

(i) A parent of a preschool-age child with special needs appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(4) In the event the Chairman of the Senate or House Education or Appropriations Committees is unable to attend any meeting of the task force, the vice-chairman of the respective committee shall be authorized to attend and vote at such meeting.

Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after passage of this act, and, within fifteen (15) days thereafter on a day to be designated jointly by the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House and the State Superintendent of Education, the task force shall meet and organize by selecting from its membership a chairman and a vice-chairmen. The vice-chairmen shall also serve as secretary and shall be responsible for keeping all records of the task force. A majority of the members of the task force shall constitute a quorum. In the selection of its officers and the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of a majority of the task force shall be required. All members shall be notified in writing of all meetings, such notices to be mailed at least five (5) days prior to the date on which a meeting is to be held.

(5) Members of the task force who are not legislators shall be compensated at the per diem rate authorized by Section 25-3-69, Mississippi Code of 1972, and shall be reimbursed in accordance with Section 25-3-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, for mileage and actual expense incurred in the performance of their duties. Any member who is also a state employee shall not be eligible to receive per diem compensation. No task force member may incur per

95 diem, travel or other expenses unless previously authorized by
96 vote, at a meeting of the task force, which action shall be
97 recorded in the official minutes of said meeting. Legislative
98 members of the committee shall be paid from the contingent expense
99 funds of their respective houses in the same amounts as provided
100 for committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session;
101 however, no per diem or expense for attending meetings of the task
102 force will be paid while the Legislature is in session.
103 Non-legislative members shall be paid from any funds made
104 available to the task force for that purpose.

105 (6) The task force is empowered to hire staff independent of
106 any agency represented, as well as to utilize clerical and legal
107 staff already employed by the State Department of Education, the
108 Office of the Governor and the Legislature and any other staff
109 assistance made available to it.

110 (7) Funding for the task force may be provided from any
111 funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature to the State
112 Department of Education for that purpose.

113 (8) Upon presentation of its report to the 2000 Regular
114 Session, the task force shall be dissolved.

115 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
116 and after its passage.