

By: Senator(s) Thames, Huggins, Williamson, Furniss, Gordon, Michel, White (5th), Kirby, White (29th), Hamilton, Walls, Gollott, Stogner, Lee, Robertson, King, Chaney, Turner, Carmichael, Ross, Carlton, Cuevas, Minor, Jordan, Jackson, Johnson (19th), Dawkins, Frazier, Harvey, Mettetal, Dickerson, Burton, Scoper, Moffatt

To: Fees, Salaries and Administration; Appropriations

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2414

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE PEER COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH AND
2 MAINTAIN A TOLL-FREE GRIEVANCE REPORTING TELEPHONE SYSTEM FOR THE
3 RECEIPT AND REFERRAL FOR INVESTIGATION OF ALL COMPLAINTS
4 CONCERNING EMPLOYEE COURTESY AND SERVICE FROM STATE AGENCIES THAT
5 SERVE THE GENERAL PUBLIC; TO REQUIRE STATE AGENCIES THAT SERVE THE
6 GENERAL PUBLIC TO POST IN A CONSPICUOUS PLACE A SIGN PRINTED
7 THEREON THE TOLL-FREE TELEPHONE NUMBER; TO REQUIRE THE PEER
8 COMMITTEE TO SUBMIT A SUMMARY OF THE COMPLAINT ACTIVITY TO THE
9 MEMBERS OF THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE BUDGET COMMITTEE; TO AUTHORIZE
10 THE PEER COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT A COMPLETE REVIEW OF ANY TELEPHONE
11 COMPLAINT AT ITS DISCRETION; TO INSURE THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF PEER
12 RECORDS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

14 SECTION 1. (1) In order to determine the effectiveness of a
15 toll-free complaint hot line, the PEER Committee shall operate a
16 toll-free complaint hot line for a period of six (6) months,
17 beginning July 1, 2001, and ending December 31, 2001, as a pilot
18 project. In conducting this pilot project, the PEER Committee
19 shall select five (5) counties in the state, one (1) from each of
20 the congressional districts as currently constituted, and shall
21 notify all state agencies operating offices in such counties that
22 they must post in a conspicuous place a sign printed with the
23 question, "How am I serving you?," the toll-free telephone number
24 of the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and
25 Expenditure Review (PEER), and instructions on how complaints
26 about agency courtesy and service may be referred to the PEER
27 Committee. The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
28 Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) shall provide each agency
29 with a design for the above-described sign. All such signs shall
30 be produced at the expense of each agency, and shall be posted in
31 all agency offices in the five (5) counties selected by the PEER
32 Committee for inclusion in the pilot project.



33 (2) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance
34 Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) shall establish and
35 maintain a toll-free grievance reporting telephone system for the
36 receipt of all complaints concerning employee courtesy and service
37 from state agencies that serve the general public in the five (5)
38 counties selected by the PEER Committee for inclusion in the pilot
39 project.

40 (3) Upon receipt of a complaint, the Joint Legislative
41 Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER)
42 shall notify the executive director of any agency that was the
43 subject of any telephone courtesy or service complaint and shall
44 refer such complaint to the agency for investigation. Any agency
45 which was the subject of a telephone complaint shall provide PEER
46 with a report on corrective actions taken in response to such
47 complaint.

48 (4) The Joint Committee on Performance Evaluation and
49 Expenditure Review (PEER), at its discretion, may retain any
50 telephone courtesy or service complaint, or any component of such
51 complaint, to serve as the basis for a complete performance
52 evaluation, expenditure review, audit or investigation. Reports
53 of the outcome of such performance evaluations, expenditure
54 review, audits or investigations shall be made as provided for in
55 Section 5-3-61. The authority to receive and refer telephone
56 complaints on agency courtesy and service is supplemental to all
57 other authority granted to the PEER Committee by law. Nothing
58 included in this section shall be construed as diminishing the
59 authority of the PEER Committee to conduct any performance
60 evaluation, expenditure review, audit or investigation in
61 accordance with any other provision of law.

62 (5) No report required under this section shall require the
63 Joint Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review
64 (PEER) to disclose any information which by committee rules is
65 required to be kept confidential.



66 (6) For purposes of this section, the term "state agencies"
67 means any agency as defined in Section 25-9-107(d).

68 SECTION 2. By December 15, 2001, the PEER Committee shall
69 prepare a report to the Legislature on the effectiveness of this
70 pilot project. The committee shall consider the following factors
71 in preparing the study: the responsiveness of agencies to whom
72 complaints were forwarded, the impact of the pilot program on PEER
73 workload, the cost of handling each complaint, and any other
74 factors the PEER Committee considers appropriate to an evaluation
75 of the pilot project.

76 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
77 and after July 1, 2001, and shall stand repealed from and after
78 January 1, 2002.

