

By: Representatives Brown, Mayo

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 884

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-21-51, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO IMPLEMENT A VOLUNTARY
3 PILOT PROGRAM FOR PREKINDERGARTEN-AGE CHILDREN CONTINGENT UPON
4 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THAT PURPOSE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-21-51, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 37-21-51. (1) As used in Sections 37-21-51 through
9 37-21-55, the term "preschool children" means any children who
10 have not entered kindergarten.

11 (2) To ensure that all children have access to quality early
12 childhood education and development services, the Legislature
13 finds and declares the following:

14 (a) Parents have the primary duty to educate their
15 young preschool children;

16 (b) The State of Mississippi can assist and educate
17 parents in their role as the primary caregivers and educators of
18 young preschool children; and

19 (c) There is a need to explore innovative approaches
20 and strategies for aiding parents and families in the education
21 and development of young preschool children.

22 (3) The State Board of Education shall implement a voluntary
23 pilot program for four-year-old children beginning with the
24 2007-2008 school year, contingent upon the availability of funds
25 specifically appropriated for that purpose. An equal number of
26 programs shall be funded in each of the state's four (4)
27 congressional districts. Pilot programs shall be selected for
28 funding based upon a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP)

29 process. The RFP shall be developed by an oversight committee
30 representing the State Department of Education, the Department of
31 Human Services, the Mississippi Head Start Association, the
32 Mississippi Head Start Collaboration Office and two (2)
33 representatives from private/parochial child care programs. Grant
34 criteria shall require collaboration with other programs such as
35 public school prekindergarten, licensed child care centers, and
36 Head Start. Contingent upon appropriations, the State Department
37 of Education shall conduct an evaluation of the preschool pilot
38 programs and shall submit a report to the Legislature regarding
39 the effectiveness of the pilot programs annually.

40 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
41 and after July 1, 2007.