

By: Representatives Gibbs (72nd), Summers,  
Butler-Washington, Jackson (45th), James-  
Jones, Nelson

To: Public Health and Human  
Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 877

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH TO TRACK  
2 FOOD DESERTS WITHIN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO REQUIRE THE  
3 DEPARTMENT TO PROVIDE AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE BY  
4 DECEMBER 31 OF EACH YEAR IDENTIFYING THE LOCATION OF FOOD DESERTS  
5 IN THE STATE AND HEALTH ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD DESERTS; TO  
6 DEFINE THE TERM "FOOD DESERT"; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

8 **SECTION 1.** The State Department of Health shall provide an  
9 annual report to the Legislature by December 31 of each year which  
10 identifies the locations of food deserts within the State of  
11 Mississippi and provides information about health issues  
12 associated with food deserts. If the annual report contains  
13 information from the federal government which identifies the  
14 locations of food deserts in the state, and provides information  
15 on health issues associated with food deserts, then the  
16 requirements of this section are satisfied. For the  
17 purposes of this section, the term "food desert" means an area  
18 with a poverty rate of at least twenty percent (20%) where at  
19 least one-third (1/3) of the population lives more than a mile  
20 from a supermarket or large grocery store, farmers' market or



21 healthy food provider, which results in the area being void of  
22 fresh fruit, vegetables and other healthful whole foods due, in  
23 part, to a lack of access and availability.

24           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
25 and after July 1, 2024.

