

By: Senator(s) Boyd, DeLano, McLendon

To: Universities and Colleges

SENATE BILL NO. 2725

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
2 EFFICIENCY TASK FORCE" CREATED TO EXAMINE THE EFFICIENCY AND  
3 EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM IN MISSISSIPPI, AS  
4 IT RELATES TO THE UNIVERSITIES' COLLECTIVE MISSION OF ENROLLING  
5 AND GRADUATING MORE DEGREED MISSISSIPPIANS AND RETAINING THEM IN  
6 THE STATE, AND ANTICIPATED NATIONWIDE CHALLENGES WITH REGARD TO  
7 DEMOGRAPHIC SHIFTS AND A PROJECTED OVERALL DECLINE IN ENROLLMENT;  
8 TO REQUIRE THE TASK FORCE TO DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE  
9 LEGISLATURE ON CHANGES TO POLICY AND LAWS IN MISSISSIPPI WITH A  
10 GOAL OF INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF THE PUBLIC UNIVERSITY SYSTEM  
11 IN THE STATE; TO SET THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK FORCE; TO PROVIDE  
12 FOR OTHER PROVISIONS RELATED THERETO, INCLUDING PER DIEM AND  
13 VOTING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is hereby established the "Mississippi  
16 University System Efficiency Task Force" created to examine the  
17 efficiency and effectiveness of the public university system in  
18 Mississippi, as it relates to the universities' collective mission  
19 of enrolling and graduating more degreed Mississippians and  
20 retaining them in the state, and anticipated nationwide challenges  
21 with regard to demographic shifts and a projected overall decline  
22 in enrollment. The task force shall develop recommendations to  
23 the Legislature on changes to policy and laws in Mississippi with



24 a goal of increasing the efficiency of the public university  
25 system in Mississippi, planning for future demographic shifts and  
26 possible enrollment declines at all institutions and the state  
27 level, and continuing progression toward the goal of increasing  
28 the post-secondary education attainment level in the state.

29 (2) The members of the task force shall be as follows:

30 (a) The Chairmen of the Universities and Colleges  
31 Committees of the Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of  
32 Representatives, or their designees from their respective  
33 committee membership;

34 (b) The Chairmen of the Appropriation Committees of the  
35 Mississippi Senate and the Mississippi House of Representatives,  
36 or their designees from their respective committee membership;

37 (c) The Chairmen of the Finance Committee of the  
38 Mississippi Senate and the Ways and Means Committee of the  
39 Mississippi House of Representatives, or their designees from  
40 their respective committee membership;

41 (d) The Director of the University Research Center and  
42 State Economist, or his or her designee;

43 (e) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree  
44 from one (1) of the four (4) public regional universities in  
45 Mississippi appointed by the Governor. Such designee shall have  
46 significant business or other professional experience and shall be  
47 a resident of the State of Mississippi;



48           (f) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree  
49 from one (1) of the three (3) public historically black  
50 universities in Mississippi appointed by the Governor. Such  
51 designee shall have significant business or other professional  
52 experience and shall be a resident of the State of Mississippi;  
53 and

54           (g) One (1) designee who holds an undergraduate degree  
55 from one (1) of the four (4) public research universities in  
56 Mississippi appointed by the Lieutenant Governor. Such designee  
57 shall have significant business or other professional experience  
58 and shall be a resident of the State of Mississippi.

59           (3) The task force shall meet within forty-five (45) days of  
60 the effective date of this act and shall evaluate the current  
61 data, resources, and laws and policies of the State of  
62 Mississippi. Specifically, the task force shall:

63           (a) Evaluate the current funding formula and  
64 appropriations process for the Mississippi public university  
65 system, particularly as it relates to enrollment and graduation  
66 rates;

67           (b) Evaluate the process of developing physical plant  
68 plans for Mississippi's public universities, including the use of  
69 enrollment data and projections in such plans and the Mississippi  
70 Institution of Higher Learning's role in determining collective  
71 system needs requiring additional state resources;



72 (c) Collect and analyze publicly available data and  
73 statistics related to enrollment and graduation rates and  
74 projections, with particular focus on the enrollment and  
75 graduation rates of Mississippi residents, as well as other data  
76 relating to shifting demographics, at all of Mississippi's public  
77 universities;

78 (d) Examine any existing or developing plans, both on  
79 an individual public university and university system basis, to  
80 address projected demographic shifts and enrollment declines;

81 (e) Evaluate successful strategies for addressing  
82 challenges in efficiency and enrollment in the Mississippi  
83 university system and across the nation, including current  
84 partnerships across the system; and

85 (f) Review any other matters related to the above  
86 issues or the efficiency and effectiveness of the public  
87 university system in Mississippi.

88 (4) The task force may request the assistance of the  
89 Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning and any other related  
90 agency, entity or organization with expertise in higher education,  
91 demographic, enrollment and other issues.

92 (5) The Chairmen of the Universities and Colleges Committees  
93 in the Mississippi Senate and Mississippi House of Representatives  
94 shall call the first meeting. The members of the task force shall  
95 elect a Chair or co-Chairs from among the members at its first  
96 meeting. The task force shall develop and report its findings and



97 recommendations to the Mississippi Legislature on or before  
98 October 1, 2024. A majority of the membership shall be required  
99 to approve any final report and recommendation. Meetings of the  
100 task force shall be held at the State Capitol; however, if it is  
101 not feasible for the task force to hold an in-person meeting, the  
102 task force may convene utilizing an online meeting platform that  
103 is accessible for viewing by the public.

104 (6) Subject to appropriations, members of the task force who  
105 are not state employees may be compensated at the per diem rate  
106 authorized by Section 25-3-69 and reimbursed in accordance with  
107 Section 25-3-41 for mileage and actual expenses incurred in the  
108 performance of their duties. However, task force members may not  
109 incur per diem, travel or other expenses unless previously  
110 authorized by vote at a meeting of the task force, which action  
111 must be recorded in the official minutes of the meeting. Per diem  
112 and expense payments made pursuant to this subsection may be paid  
113 from any funds made available to the task force for that purpose.

114 (7) The Joint Legislative Committee on Performance  
115 Evaluation and Expenditure Review shall provide necessary clerical  
116 support for the meetings of the task force and the preparation of  
117 the report.

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

