MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2008

By: Representative Dickson

To: Select Committee on Poverty

HOUSE BILL NO. 430

AN ACT TO CREATE A JOINT LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE TO ADDRESS CHILDREN AND FAMILY ISSUES, BY THE CREATION OF A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, AND BY THE CREATION OF SMALL GROUP HOMES AND COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMS AND IMPLEMENTING A STATEWIDE YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL; TO REQUIRE A REPORT TO THE 2009 REGULAR SESSION OF THE LEGISLATURE; TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ALL FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S ISSUES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) There is created a joint legislative study committee to establish measurable goals and benchmarks for the State of Mississippi relating to children and family issues. The committee shall make recommendations on all aspects of family services with an emphasis on government assistance, child care, promoting educational enhancement, unemployment, youth involvement and crime deterrence, crisis intervention and reducing disparities in education, income and availability of health care. The committee shall, at a minimum, study and report to the 2009 Regular Session of the Legislature on the following:

(a) Develop initiatives to combat juvenile disciplinary problems;

(b) Gather information about current funding and services for children's services, by creating a children's budget and a report card to provide a comprehensive glance of total funding by age and level and type of services provided;

(c) Coordinate funds and programs to minimize duplication and maximize the return on investments in children and youth programs;

(d) Develop "a positive youth development approach" that sets clear direction and provides a vision for policymakers;

(e) Create small group homes and community-based programs aimed at shutting down and phasing out large juvenile institutions;

(f) Create one (1) group home in each congressional district; and

(g) Create a statewide youth advisory council, to get youth involved in the government process and community involvement.

The joint committee shall make a report of its findings and recommendations to the Legislature by January 1, 2009, including any recommended legislation.

(2) The joint committee shall be composed of the following eleven (11) members:

(a) The Vice Chairman of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Vice Chairman of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee;

(b) Two (2) senators to be appointed by the Lieutenant Governor;

(c) Two (2) representatives to be appointed by the Speaker of the House; and

(d) Five (5) members to be appointed by the Governor of the State of Mississippi, who shall consist of state health agency heads, executive directors and other health-related officials.

(3) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after the effective date of this act. The joint committee shall hold its first meeting before August 1, 2008. The Vice Chairman of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee and the Vice Chairman of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee shall serve as cochairmen of the committee.

(4) A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. In the adoption of the rules, resolutions and reports, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members shall be required. All members shall be notified in writing of

all meetings, such notices shall be mailed at least five (5) days prior to the date on which a meeting is to be held.

(5) Members of the committee shall receive the customary per diem compensation, expense reimbursement and mileage for attending committee meetings when the Legislature is not in session.

(6) The committee is authorized to accept funds from any source, public or private, to be expended in the implementing of its duties under this section.

(7) To effectuate the purposes of this section, any department, division, board, bureau, committee or agency of the state or any political subdivision thereof, shall, at the request of the cochairmen of the committee, provide such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the committee to properly carry out its duties.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2008.