MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representatives Massengill, Felsher

To: Public Health and Human Services; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 14

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ESTABLISH A GRANT PROGRAM FOR REGIONAL FOOD BANKS TO PROVIDE ANNUAL GRANT FUNDING IN THE AMOUNT OF ONE MILLION DOLLARS TO THE FOOD BANKS FOR THE PURCHASE, TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD IN MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH GRANTS SHALL BE MADE FROM FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR THAT PURPOSE; TO PRESCRIBE STANDARDS FOR FOOD PURCHASES MADE THROUGH THE USE OF PROGRAM FUNDS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT WILL ALLOCATE MONEY TO REGIONAL FOOD BANKS SERVING MISSISSIPPIANS BASED ON POPULATION, FOOD INSECURITY RATES AND COUNTY SERVICE AREAS; TO PROVIDE A LIMIT ON THE PERCENTAGE OF GRANT FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE PROGRAM THAT MAY BE USED BY ANY REGIONAL FOOD BANK FOR THE PAYMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND INCIDENTAL COSTS; TO PROVIDE THAT PERSONS WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD FUNDED BY THE PROGRAM BASED ON FEDERAL GUIDELINES SHALL NOT BE CHARGED FOR FOOD OR ENCOURAGED TO CONTRIBUTE MONEY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FOOD UNDER THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section, the term "regional food banks" means the three (3) Feeding America network food banks that serve Mississippi, including: Feeding the Gulf Coast, Mid-South Food Bank and Mississippi Food Network, which are nonprofit organizations that solicit, warehouse and redistribute eligible food to agencies in Mississippi that feed families and individuals who qualify based on federal guidelines.

(2) The Mississippi Department of Human Services (department) shall establish a grant program for regional food banks to provide annual grant funding in the amount of One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00) to the food banks for the purchase, transportation, storage and distribution of food in Mississippi. Such grants shall be made from funds made available to the department for that purpose. Grants made under the program shall be used only for the purchase of food or agricultural commodities for repackaging or processing, or both, of food for distribution to emergency food providers serving Mississippi and program participants residing in Mississippi.

(3) The program shall be administered by the department and all administrative costs shall be reimbursed to the department at a rate of not more than one percent (1%) from the funds described in subsection (2) of this section.

(4) All food purchases made through the use of program funds shall be made in accordance with the following standards:

(a) Procurement from Mississippi based food sources should be given preference when available and at reasonable cost;

(b) Food shall be purchased at wholesale, competitive bid prices or better; and

(c) Funds for food through this program shall be used to supplement and not replace food or funds available for food through the United States Department of Agriculture's federal commodities program.

(5) The department shall allocate money to regional food banks serving Mississippians based on population, food insecurity rates and county service areas. The annual percentage formula for each nonprofit food bank will be the total number of food insecure persons in the food bank's service area divided by the total number of food insecure persons in the state. The data for this formula shall be derived from the latest available data from Feeding America.

(6) Not more than seven percent (7%) of the grant funds made available through the program shall be used by any regional food bank for the payment of administrative and incidental costs.

(7) No person who is eligible for food funded by the program based on federal guidelines shall be charged for food or encouraged to contribute money in order to receive food under the program.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.