

By: Representatives Brown, Weathersby, Lott, Montgomery To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 214
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DESIGN
2 CURRICULUM CHOICES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN DIRECT ENTRY
3 INTO THE WORKFORCE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION;
4 TO PROVIDE THAT NO LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT OR
5 SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SHALL PROHIBIT A TEACHER FROM DISCUSSING AND
6 ANSWERING QUESTIONS ON THE ORIGIN OF LIFE; TO CREATE A COMMISSION
7 TO STUDY THE EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF
8 COLLEGE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED BY THE
9 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND EVALUATE MERIT BASED COLLEGE
10 TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

12 **SECTION 1.** The State Department of Education shall design
13 curriculum choices within the current requirements for a high
14 school diploma for students who are interested in direct entry
15 into the workforce immediately following high school graduation.
16 It is the intent of the Legislature that the curriculum for this
17 program be rigorous, meeting the requirements based on research
18 outlining the skills needed for entry into the workforce. The
19 program shall comply with the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
20 The department shall design the program for entering ninth graders
21 beginning with the 2007-2008 school year. The department shall
22 report to the Legislature on January 1, 2007, on its plan for the
23 program. Students who choose the curriculum under the program
24 will receive a standard diploma.

25 **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this act shall be codified as a new
26 section in Chapter 3, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972.

27 **SECTION 3.** No local school board, school superintendent or
28 school principal shall prohibit a public school classroom teacher
29 from discussing and answering questions from individual students
30 on the origin of life.

31 SECTION 4. (1) There is created a commission to study the
32 effectiveness and efficiency of the administration of college
33 tuition assistance programs administered by the Institutions of
34 Higher Learning. In addition, the commission shall evaluate merit
35 based college tuition assistance programs and establish procedures
36 and guidelines for implementing merit based programs.

37 The commission shall make a report of its findings and
38 recommendations to the House and Senate Education Committees and
39 to the House and Senate Universities and Colleges Committees by
40 October 1, 2006, including any recommended legislation. Upon
41 submission of its report to the Legislature the commission shall
42 be dissolved.

43 (2) The commission shall be composed of the following five
44 (5) members:

45 (a) A representative of the State Department of
46 Education, to be appointed by the State Superintendent of Public
47 Education;

48 (b) A representative from the Institutions of Higher
49 Learning, to be appointed by the commissioner;

50 (c) A representative from the State Board for Community
51 and Junior Colleges, to be appointed by the executive director;

52 (d) A representative from the Mississippi Association
53 of Independent Colleges appointed by the President of the
54 Mississippi Association of Independent Colleges; and

55 (e) The State Treasurer, or his designee.

56 (3) Appointments shall be made within thirty (30) days after
57 the effective date of this act. The commission shall hold its
58 first meeting before July 15, 2006.

59 (4) Members of the commission may not be compensated for the
60 performance of their duties. Any incidental costs associated with
61 conducting the study shall be paid by the State Department of
62 Education.

63 (5) To effectuate the purposes of this section, any
64 department, division, board, bureau, commission or agency of the
65 state or of any political subdivision thereof shall, at the
66 request of the chairperson of the task force, provide to the
67 commission such facilities, assistance and data as will enable the
68 commission to properly carry out its duties.

69 **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
70 and after its passage.