

By: Senator(s) Tollison, Horhn, Williamson,  
Harden, Jordan, Frazier, Jackson (32nd),  
Butler

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2718

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO MAKE CIVIL  
2 RIGHTS EDUCATION A MANDATORY PART OF THE K-12 CURRICULUM  
3 INSTRUCTION IN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE APPROPRIATE  
4 GUIDELINES FOR GRADE LEVEL CLASSROOM LEARNING; TO ESTABLISH A  
5 MISSISSIPPI CIVIL RIGHTS EDUCATION COMMISSION TO INVENTORY CIVIL  
6 RIGHTS EXHIBITS AND RESOURCES AND COORDINATE CIVIL RIGHTS  
7 AWARENESS AND EDUCATION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS; AND FOR RELATED  
8 PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Understanding the important role the Civil Rights  
11 Movement had on the State of Mississippi and understanding the  
12 importance of teaching Mississippi's children all of our history,  
13 it is the goal of this Legislature to provide meaningful support  
14 to this most important endeavor. Mississippi's central role in  
15 the Civil Rights Struggle needs to be formalized and taught as a  
16 beacon of hope for all of our citizens.

17 **SECTION 2.** The State Board of Education shall make Civil  
18 Rights Education a mandatory part of the K-12 curriculum of  
19 instruction in Mississippi public schools. The State Department  
20 of Education shall work with the Mississippi Civil Rights  
21 Education Commission established in Section 3 in implementing  
22 these five (5) guidelines: (a) provide assistance and advice to  
23 K-12 schools with respect to the Civil Rights Movement education  
24 and awareness programs; (b) survey and catalog the extent to which  
25 Civil Rights education exists in state curricula; (c) inventory  
26 Civil Rights memorials, exhibits and resources that could be used  
27 in classrooms and other educational programs; (d) compile a list  
28 of volunteers who are willing to share their knowledge and  
29 experiences concerning the struggle for Civil Rights; (e) prepare  
30 reports for the Governor and the State Legislature on the

31 inclusion of Civil Rights studies into the educational systems of  
32 the state.

33       **SECTION 3.** (1) There is created the Mississippi Civil  
34 Rights Education Commission. The commission shall be assigned to  
35 the Office of the Secretary of State for administrative purposes  
36 only. The commission shall provide or assist education officials  
37 and other organizations with information, coordination and  
38 modification of courses or programs that include the Civil Rights  
39 Movement, and will carry out the specific responsibilities set  
40 forth in Section 2. In completing this task, the commission may  
41 act as a liaison with various bodies, including the United States  
42 Congress, the State Legislature, Teaching for Change, the William  
43 Winter Institute for Racial Reconciliation, as well as other  
44 national and international agencies. The commission shall consist  
45 of no more than fifteen (15) members, eleven (11) positions of  
46 which will be voluntary, to serve with a term of three (3) years  
47 on a rotating basis. These positions will be filled by  
48 application submitted to a joint committee formed by the William  
49 Winter Institute at the University of Mississippi, Tougaloo  
50 College, the Oral History Project at the University of Southern  
51 Mississippi and Jackson State University. Each of these four (4)  
52 entities shall remain permanent members of this commission, with  
53 representatives to be appointed by the President or Chancellor of  
54 the appropriate institution.

55       (2) The members of the commission shall be residents of this  
56 state and shall be appointed with due regard for broad geographic  
57 representation.

58       (3) The commission shall have a chairperson who shall be  
59 designated by the State Superintendent of Education from the  
60 commission membership for a term of four (4) years and eight (8)  
61 members of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the  
62 transaction of the business of the commission.

63           (4) The Mississippi Commission on Civil Rights Education  
64 shall adopt rules and regulations and set standards and policies  
65 for the organization, operation, management, budgeting and  
66 programs of the commission.

67           (5) The commission may apply for and receive gifts, grants  
68 and donations from any public or private sources, including  
69 federal and private foundation grants. Members of the commission  
70 may not be compensated for the performance of their duties except  
71 from nonstate funds that are specifically available therefor.

72           **SECTION 4.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
73 and after July 1, 2006.