

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.