

By: Representative Gipson

To: Judiciary B; Corrections

HOUSE BILL NO. 602
(As Sent to Governor)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI RE-ENTRY COUNCIL; TO
2 DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE OF SUCH COUNCIL; TO PROVIDE THAT A STEERING
3 COMMITTEE SHALL LEAD THE COUNCIL; TO LIST THE MEMBERS OF THE
4 STEERING COMMITTEE; TO PROVIDE THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF
5 THE STEERING COMMITTEE; TO PROVIDE THE LIST OF THE DUTIES FOR THE
6 STEERING COMMITTEE; TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI PUBLIC DEFENDERS
7 TASK FORCE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created the Mississippi Re-Entry
10 Council. The purpose of the council is to create effective
11 strategies to assist former inmates in their return to the general
12 population, to reduce the recidivism rates of inmates, to increase
13 public safety, and to reduce budgetary constraints presently
14 created by prison-related costs. The Re-Entry Council shall be
15 led by a steering committee.

16 (2) The Re-Entry Council Steering Committee shall be
17 composed of the following twelve (12) members, who shall serve for
18 two-year terms:

19 (a) A Mississippi United States Attorney, or a designee
20 appointed by the Governor;



21 (b) The Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of
22 Corrections, or a designee;

23 (c) The Attorney General of the State of Mississippi,
24 or a designee;

25 (d) The director of a faith-based organization involved
26 in re-entry programs, or a designee appointed by the Lieutenant
27 Governor;

28 (e) The Chief Probation Officer of the United States
29 District Courts of Mississippi, or a designee;

30 (f) A Mississippi United States District Judge, or a
31 designee appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

32 (g) The Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court,
33 or a designee;

34 (h) The Executive Director for the Mississippi
35 Department of Mental Health, or a designee;

36 (i) The Executive Director for the Mississippi Division
37 of Medicaid, or a designee;

38 (j) The Chairman of the Parole Board, or a designee;

39 (k) A person who is a former offender appointed by the
40 Chairman of the Parole Board; and

41 (l) The Director of the Mississippi Department of
42 Employment Security, or a designee.

43 (3) The Re-Entry Council Steering Committee shall have the
44 following duties:



45 (a) To consider development of a statewide approach to
46 assist re-entry of former inmates into the general population of
47 this state;

48 (b) To provide recommendations regarding evidence-based
49 approaches that equip inmates with the requisite, individualized
50 resources to promote their successful return to the general
51 population of this state;

52 (c) To review reports, studies, and materials as it
53 deems appropriate;

54 (d) To appoint such subcommittees as it finds proper;

55 (e) To study proposed legislation that seeks to resolve
56 recidivism;

57 (f) To submit recommendations from its findings to the
58 Legislature, the Governor and the Mississippi Supreme Court. In
59 making such recommendations, the Re-entry Council Steering
60 Committee will seek input from all branches of state and local
61 government, governmental agencies, businesses and nonprofit
62 organizations throughout this state;

63 (g) To seek and receive grants;

64 (h) To hire contract personnel and/or staff using any
65 grants received; and

66 (i) To collaborate with the coordinator of the
67 transitional re-entry center, under the supervision of the
68 Mississippi Department of Corrections, which shall provide
69 administrative support to the council.



70 (4) The Chief Justice of the Mississippi Supreme Court shall
71 call the first meeting of the steering committee. At its first
72 meeting, the steering committee shall elect a chairman and vice
73 chairman from its membership and adopt rules for transacting its
74 business and keeping records. Officers shall serve one-year terms
75 or until such time as a successor is elected.

76 SECTION 2. (1) There is created the Mississippi Public
77 Defender Task Force which shall be composed of thirteen (13)
78 members as follows:

79 (a) The President of the Mississippi Public Defender
80 Association, or his designee;

81 (b) The President of the Mississippi Prosecutors
82 Association, or his designee;

83 (c) A representative of the Administrative Office of
84 Courts;

85 (d) A representative of the Mississippi Supreme Court;

86 (e) A representative of the Conference of Circuit
87 Judges;

88 (f) A representative of the Mississippi Attorney
89 General's Office;

90 (g) A representative of the Mississippi Association of
91 Supervisors;

92 (h) A representative of The Mississippi Bar;

93 (i) A representative of the Magnolia Bar Association;



94 (j) The Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee,
95 Division B, or his designee;

96 (k) The Chairman of the Senate Appropriations
97 Committee, or his designee;

98 (l) The Chairman of the House Judiciary En Banc
99 Committee, or his designee;

100 (m) The Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee,
101 or his designee.

102 (2) At its first meeting, the task force shall elect a
103 chairman and vice chairman from its membership and shall adopt
104 rules for transacting its business and keeping records. Members
105 of the task force shall receive a per diem in the amount provided
106 in Section 25-3-69 for each day engaged in the business of the
107 task force. Members of the task force other than the legislative
108 members shall receive reimbursement for travel expenses incurred
109 while engaged in official business of the task force in accordance
110 with Section 25-3-41 and the legislative members of the task force
111 shall receive the expense allowance provided for in Section
112 5-1-47.

113 (3) The duties of the task force shall be to:

114 (a) Make a comprehensive study of the needs by circuit
115 court districts for state-supported indigent defense counsel to
116 examine existing public defender programs, including indigent
117 defense provided in the youth courts. Reports shall be provided



118 to the Legislature each year at least one (1) month before the
119 convening of the regular session.

120 (b) Examine and study approaches taken by other states
121 in the implementation and costs of state-supported indigent
122 criminal and delinquency cases.

123 (c) To study the relationship between presiding circuit
124 and youth court judges and the appointment of criminal and
125 delinquency indigent defense counsel.

126 (4) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2018.

127 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
128 and after its passage.

