

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI



The Lieutenant Governor of the State of Mississippi and Senator Kenneth Wayne Jones

EXTEND THE SUPPORT OF THE MISSISSIPPI SENATE FOR THE NEEDS AND RIGHTS OF BREAST-FEEDING MOTHERS CONSISTENT WITH CURRENT STATE LAW.

WHEREAS, extensive research documents the diverse and significant advantages of breast-feeding for infants, mothers, families and communities, including health, nutritional, immunologic, developmental, social, economic and environmental benefits; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, along with organizations such as the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American Dietetic Association, and the American Public Health Association, recommend breast-feeding exclusively for the first six months of an infant's life; and

WHEREAS, breast-feeding is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, the United States Surgeon General, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists as the optimal form of nutrition for infants to provide them with the best start to life in all areas of development; and

WHEREAS, research studies have shown that children who are breastfed have higher rates of survival and lower incidences of certain illnesses such as meningitis, certain forms of cancer, asthma, other respiratory illnesses, bacterial and viral infections, allergies, diabetes and childhood obesity, a significant problem in Mississippi; and

WHEREAS, research studies have also shown numerous health benefits to mothers who breast-feed, including a reduced risk of postpartum hemorrhage, diabetes, ovarian and breast cancer, and developing osteoporosis; and

WHEREAS, a study reported in *The Journal of Pediatrics*, the official Journal of the American Academy of Pediatrics, concluded that for every thousand babies who are not breastfed, there are 2,033 more medical visits, 212 extra days of hospitalization, and 609 excessive prescriptions in the infant's first year of life; and

WHEREAS, in addition to health benefits, breast-feeding provides significant economic and social benefits to the state, including reduced healthcare costs, reduced employee absenteeism and lost income for care attributable to child illness, as well as increased morale fostered by practices that support breast-feeding; and

WHEREAS, in addition to healthcare savings and wages, the direct economic benefit to families is also significant. The Surgeon General estimates that the average family can save \$1,200-\$1,500 during a baby's first year of life by practicing optimal breast-feeding practices; and

WHEREAS, sixty percent of births in Mississippi are covered by Medicaid and increasing breast-feeding rates among these infants may be one potential strategy for state budget savings; and


WHEREAS, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention documents that Mississippi has the lowest breast-feeding rates in the country and only 50% of Mississippi babies are ever breastfed, and only 5% of Mississippi babies are exclusively breastfed for the recommended six months:

NOW, THEREFORE, THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI AND SENATOR KENNETH WAYNE JONES, extend the support of the Mississippi Senate for the needs and rights of breast-feeding mothers consistent with current state law, as follows:

- a. Recognize the extensive health, economic, and societal benefits that breast-feeding provides to mothers, babies, families, communities and the state as a whole;
- b. Support and encourage breast-feeding and shall work to ensure the needs of breast-feeding mothers are supported and the rights of breast-feeding mothers, currently codified in Sections 13-5-23, 17-25-7/9, 43-20-31, 71-1-55, and 97-29-31, Mississippi Code Annotated, are implemented and upheld;
- c. Encourage the State of Mississippi and all Mississippi employers to recognize the benefits of breast-feeding and strongly support and encourage its practice by working to accommodate the needs of breast-feeding employees by providing unpaid break time and appropriate private spaces for breast-feeding and/or the expression of milk; and
- d. Encourage hospital and healthcare professionals to support and promote breast-feeding as a practice to new and expectant mothers by providing clear information about the benefits of breast-feeding and by providing prenatal and postnatal breast-feeding support to mothers and families which includes, but is not limited to, breast-feeding instruction and information and referrals to breast-feeding resources within the state. Hospitals are also encouraged to adopt hospital infant feeding policies that promote breast-feeding, guided by the principles of the UNICEF/WHO Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative.

Signed this 7th day of August, 2014.


Lieutenant Governor Tate Reeves


Senator Kenneth Wayne Jones, District 21

