



PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Grace Fisher
MDOC Communications Director

Phone: (601) 359-5608
E-mail: gfisher@mdoc.state.ms.us

GOVERNOR'S TASK FORCE ON MDOC WANTS TO HEAR FROM THE PUBLIC

JACKSON - A task force Gov. Phil Bryant created to oversee the Mississippi Department of Corrections' contracts review will hold three hearings to get input from the public, starting Saturday.

Elected officials, families of victims, families of inmates, current and prospective vendors, and suppliers to MDOC facilities are invited.

"The task force is interested in hearing real-life experiences from Mississippians, including these groups directly affected by the management of the Department of Corrections," said co-chairman Andy Taggart, an attorney and former chief of staff to Gov. Kirk Fordice.

The first hearing will be held this Saturday, Feb. 21, in Hattiesburg at USM's Thad Cochran Center, Room 418A and B from 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. The other two are as follows:

- Cleveland, Delta State University, Hugh Ellis Walker Alumni Foundation House, 12 p.m.- 2 p.m., March 7, 2015
- Jackson, Woolfolk State Office Building, Room 145, 10 a.m.-12 p.m., March 20, 2015

Comments will be limited to five minutes, however, the task force may extend them. Task force members also are accepting written comments. "If people prefer to provide information confidentially, arrangements have been made to make that possible," Taggart said.

Written comments can be provided at taskforce@dfa.ms.gov or at the following address: Andy Taggart, MDOC Task Force Co-Chairman, 1022 Highland Colony Parkway, Suite 101, Ridgeland, MS 39157.

The three hearings will help the task force fulfill its charge from Bryant to solicit public comments on needed changes to procurement law, regulations and policies. Bryant created the five-member panel in November following the indictment of former Corrections Commissioner Christopher Epps for alleged kickbacks from contracts.

Attorney and former Hinds Circuit Judge Robert Gibbs is co-chairman of the task force. The three other task force members are:

- Mike Moore, an attorney and a former state attorney general
- Constance Slaughter-Harvey, an attorney, a former assistant secretary of state and president of the Legacy Foundation; and
- Bill Crawford: president of The Montgomery Institute and a former state lawmaker.