

By: Representative Dedeaux

To: County Affairs

HOUSE BILL NO. 382

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 19-21-105 AND 41-61-57, MISSISSIPPI
2 CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE CORONERS AND MEDICAL EXAMINERS TO BE
3 TRAINED IN DEALING WITH GRIEVING FAMILIES; AND FOR RELATED
4 PURPOSES.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 19-21-105, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
7 amended as follows:

8 19-21-105. (1) Each coroner elected in the 1987 general
9 election and thereafter shall attend the Mississippi Crime
10 Laboratory and State Medical Examiner Death Investigation Training
11 School provided for in subsection (5) of Section 41-61-57, and
12 shall successfully complete subsequent testing on the subject
13 material, which shall include six (6) hours of training in dealing
14 with grieving families, prior to taking the oath of office. If
15 the elected coroner fails to successfully complete the school and
16 testing, he shall not be eligible to take the oath of office.

17 (2) Upon successful completion of the death investigation
18 training school, the coroner shall take the oath of office, and he
19 then shall be designated the chief county medical examiner or
20 chief county medical examiner investigator, as provided in
21 subsection (2) of Section 41-61-57, and shall perform the duties
22 of such office as required by law.

23 SECTION 2. Section 41-61-57, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
24 amended as follows:

25 41-61-57. (1) There are hereby created the positions of
26 county medical examiners and county medical examiner
27 investigators, to be established as herein provided through

28 successful completion of the death investigation training school
29 provided for in subsection (5) of this section. Each county
30 medical examiner (CME) shall be a doctor of medicine (M.D.) or
31 osteopathic medicine (D.O.) licensed in the State of Mississippi.
32 Each county medical examiner investigator (CMEI) shall be a
33 nonphysician who shall, as a minimum, possess a high school
34 graduation diploma or its equivalent. Extra consideration for the
35 CMEI position may be given for experience and/or training in
36 health-related fields and medicolegal death investigations.

37 (2) Each coroner elected in the 1987 general election and
38 thereafter, upon successful completion of the death investigation
39 training school provided for in subsection (5) of this section,
40 shall be recognized as a county medical examiner or county medical
41 examiner investigator, according to the qualifications set out in
42 subsection (1) of this section, and shall be designated the chief
43 for the county in which he was elected. If the elected or
44 appointed coroner fails to successfully complete the death
45 investigation training school, and thus is unable to take the oath
46 of office, as provided in Section 19-21-105, there shall promptly
47 be appointed a coroner pro tempore in the manner prescribed by
48 Section 9-1-27, and that person shall be designated the chief
49 county medical examiner or county medical examiner investigator
50 until the time of the next death investigation training school,
51 which he must successfully complete or be removed from office. Any
52 elected coroner who has failed to successfully complete the death
53 investigation training school may attend any subsequent death
54 investigation training school conducted during the term for which
55 he was elected, and upon the successful completion thereof, he
56 shall become the chief CME or CMEI for the county in which he was
57 elected. The coroner pro tempore then shall become a deputy CME
58 or CMEI, provided he has successfully completed the death
59 investigation training school. Notwithstanding anything in this
60 section to the contrary, each coroner holding office on July 1,
61 1986, shall be the chief CME or CMEI for the county in which he
62 was elected through the expiration of his term in January 1988
63 without having to attend the death investigation training school;
64 however, he may voluntarily attend any such school conducted prior

65 to that time.

66 (3) There shall be at least one (1) county medical examiner
67 and/or county medical examiner investigator for each county, and
68 one (1) county medical examiner or county medical examiner
69 investigator shall be designated as the chief for each county,
70 except as otherwise provided in subsection (4) of this section.
71 Any county may have deputy county medical examiners or deputy
72 county medical examiner investigators as deemed necessary who
73 shall be appointed jointly by the board of supervisors and the CME
74 or CMEI. However, when the population of a county reaches a total
75 of twenty thousand (20,000) or greater, there shall be one or more
76 officially appointed deputies. Deputies shall be subject to the
77 same qualifications, training and certification requirements, and
78 shall possess the same authority and discharge the same duties, as
79 other county medical examiners or county medical examiner
80 investigators, and shall receive fees and expenses as provided in
81 Sections 41-61-69 and 41-61-75. Any CME or CMEI may be removed by
82 the State Medical Examiner prior to the expiration of his term as
83 CME or CMEI for inefficiency, or other good cause, after written
84 notice and a hearing in compliance with due process law.

85 (4) One (1) person may serve as the chief CME or CMEI for
86 two (2) or more adjacent counties when that person consents and
87 the boards of supervisors of each county involved and the State
88 Medical Examiner consent in writing. Each respective county
89 involved shall be responsible for payment for the services given
90 to that county by the chief CME or CMEI.

91 (5) Chief and deputy CME's and CMEI's shall attend the death
92 investigation training school provided by the Mississippi Crime
93 Laboratory and the State Medical Examiner, and shall successfully
94 complete subsequent testing on the subject material by the State
95 Medical Examiner at least once every four (4) years. Such
96 training shall include six (6) hours of training in dealing with
97 grieving families. Room, board and transportation expenses for

98 attending the school shall be borne by the county in which the CME
99 or CMEI is serving. In addition to the above training, the
100 individual shall receive at least twenty-four (24) hours annually
101 of continuing education as prescribed and certified by the State
102 Medical Examiner. If the above requirements for training or
103 continuing education are not met, the individual immediately shall
104 be disqualified and removed from office as CME and/or CMEI.
105 Reapplication for the office may be made the following year after
106 removal.

107 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
108 and after July 1, 1999.