By: Representative Robinson (84th)

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To: Appropriations
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HOUSE BILL NO. 935

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 25-11-103, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, 1 2 TO PROVIDE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO 3 BECOME OR REMAIN MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM REGARDLESS OF THE WEEKLY OR MONTHLY NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED; 4 TO AMEND SECTION 25-11-105, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN 5 CONFORMITY TO THE PRECEDING PROVISION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES. 6 7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: SECTION 1. Section 25-11-103, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 8 9 amended as follows: 25-11-103. The following words and phrases as used in 10 11 Articles 1 and 3, unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context, shall have the following meanings: 12 13 (a) "Accumulated contributions" shall mean the sum of 14 all the amounts deducted from the compensation of a member and credited to his individual account in the annuity savings account, 15 together with regular interest thereon as provided in Section 16 25-11-123. 17 18 (b) "Actuarial cost" shall mean the amount of funds presently required to provide future benefits as determined by the 19 20 board based on applicable tables and formulas provided by the 21 actuary. (c) "Actuarial equivalent" shall mean a benefit of 22 23 equal value to the accumulated contributions, annuity or benefit, as the case may be, when computed upon the basis of such mortality 24 25 tables as shall be adopted by the board of trustees, and regular 26 interest. 27

27 (d) "Actuarial tables" shall mean such tables of28 mortality and rates of interest as shall be adopted by the board

29 in accordance with the recommendation of the actuary.

30 (e) "Agency" shall mean any governmental body employing31 persons in the state service.

"Average compensation" shall mean the average of 32 (f) 33 the four (4) highest years of earned compensation reported for an 34 employee in a fiscal or calendar year period, or combination 35 thereof which do not overlap, or the last forty-eight (48) consecutive months of earned compensation reported for an 36 37 employee. The four (4) years need not be successive or joined years of service. In no case shall the average compensation so 38 determined be in excess of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand 39 40 Dollars (\$125,000.00). In computing the average compensation, any 41 amount paid in a lump sum for personal leave shall be included in the calculation to the extent that such amount does not exceed an 42 amount which is equal to thirty (30) days of earned compensation 43 44 and to the extent that it does not cause the employees' earned 45 compensation to exceed the maximum reportable amount specified in Section 25-11-103(k); provided, however, that such thirty-day 46 47 limitation shall not prevent the inclusion in the calculation of leave earned under federal regulations prior to July 1, 1976, and 48 frozen as of that date as referred to in Section 25-3-99. Only 49 the amount of lump sum pay for personal leave due and paid upon 50 51 the death of a member attributable for up to one hundred fifty 52 (150) days shall be used in the deceased member's average compensation calculation in determining the beneficiary's 53 54 benefits. In computing the average compensation, no amounts shall be used which are in excess of the amount on which contributions 55 were required and paid. If any member who is or has been granted 56 any increase in annual salary or compensation of more than eight 57 58 percent (8%) retires within twenty-four (24) months from the date 59 that such increase becomes effective, then the board shall exclude 60 that part of the increase in salary or compensation that exceeds eight percent (8%) in calculating that member's average 61

62 compensation for retirement purposes. The board may enforce this 63 provision by rule or regulation. However, increases in 64 compensation in excess of eight percent (8%) per year granted within twenty-four (24) months of the date of retirement may be 65 66 included in such calculation of average compensation if 67 satisfactory proof is presented to the board showing that the increase in compensation was the result of an actual change in the 68 position held or services rendered, or that such compensation 69 70 increase was authorized by the State Personnel Board or was 71 increased as a result of statutory enactment, and the employer 72 furnishes an affidavit stating that such increase granted within 73 the last twenty-four (24) months was not contingent on a promise 74 or agreement of the employee to retire. Nothing in Section 75 25-3-31 shall affect the calculation of the average compensation of any member for the purposes of this article. The average 76 77 compensation of any member who retires before July 1, 1992, shall 78 not exceed the annual salary of the Governor.

"Beneficiary" shall mean any person entitled to 79 (q) 80 receive a retirement allowance, an annuity or other benefit as provided by Articles 1 and 3. In the event of the death prior to 81 82 retirement of any member whose spouse and/or children are not entitled to a retirement allowance, the lawful spouse of a member 83 84 at the time of the death of such member shall be the beneficiary 85 of such member unless the member has designated another beneficiary subsequent to the date of marriage in writing, and 86 87 filed such writing in the office of the executive director of the board of trustees. No designation or change of beneficiary shall 88 89 be made in any other manner.

90 (h) "Board" shall mean the board of trustees provided 91 in Section 25-11-15 to administer the retirement system herein 92 created.

93 (i) "Creditable service" shall mean "prior service,"94 "retroactive service" and all lawfully credited unused leave not

95 exceeding the accrual rates and limitations provided in Section 25-3-91 et seq., as of the date of withdrawal from service plus 96 97 "membership service" for which credit is allowable as provided in Section 25-11-109. Except to limit creditable service reported to 98 99 the system for the purpose of computing an employee's retirement 100 allowance or annuity or benefits provided in this article, nothing in this paragraph shall limit or otherwise restrict the power of 101 the governing authority of a municipality or other political 102 103 subdivision of the state to adopt such vacation and sick leave 104 policies as it deems necessary.

(j) "Child" means either a natural child of the member, a child that has been made a child of the member by applicable court action before the death of the member, or a child under the permanent care of the member at the time of the latter's death, which permanent care status shall be determined by evidence satisfactory to the board.

111 "Earned compensation" shall mean the full amount (k) 112 earned by an employee for a given pay period including any 113 maintenance furnished up to a maximum of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Dollars (\$125,000.00) per year, and proportionately for 114 115 less than one (1) year of service. The value of such maintenance when not paid in money shall be fixed by the employing state 116 117 agency, and, in case of doubt, by the board of trustees as defined 118 in Section 25-11-15. In any case, earned compensation shall be limited to the regular periodic compensation paid, exclusive of 119 120 litigation fees, bond fees, and other similar extraordinary non-recurring payments. In the case of fee officials, the net 121 122 earnings from their office after deduction of expenses shall apply, except that in no case shall earned compensation be less 123 124 than the total direct payments made by the state or governmental 125 subdivisions to the official, and employer and employee contributions shall be paid thereon. In the case of members of 126 127 the state Legislature, all remuneration or amounts paid, except

128 mileage allowance, shall apply. The amount by which an eligible 129 employee's salary is reduced pursuant to a salary reduction 130 agreement authorized under Section 25-17-5 shall be included as earned compensation under this paragraph, provided this inclusion 131 132 does not conflict with federal law, including federal regulations 133 and federal administrative interpretations thereunder, pertaining 134 to the Federal Insurance Contributions Act or to Internal Revenue Code Section 125 cafeteria plans. Compensation in addition to an 135 136 employee's base salary that is paid to the employee pursuant to 137 the vacation and sick leave policies of a municipality or other political subdivision of the state that employs him which exceeds 138 139 the maximums authorized by Section 25-3-91 et seq. shall be excluded from the calculation of earned compensation under this 140 141 article. The maximum salary applicable for retirement purposes before July 1, 1992, shall be the salary of the Governor. Nothing 142 143 in Section 25-3-31 shall affect the determination of the earned 144 compensation of any member for the purposes of this article.

(1) "Employee" means any person legally occupying a position in the state service, and shall include the employees of the retirement system created hereunder.

(m) "Employer" shall mean the State of Mississippi or any of its departments, agencies or subdivisions from which any employee receives his compensation.

151 "Executive director" shall mean the secretary to (n) the board of trustees, as provided in Section 25-11-15(9), and the 152 153 administrator of the Public Employees' Retirement System and all systems under the management of the board of trustees. 154 Wherever the term "Executive Secretary of the Public Employees' Retirement 155 156 System" or "executive secretary" appears in this article or in any other provision of law, it shall be construed to mean the 157 158 Executive Director of the Public Employees' Retirement System. (o) "Fiscal year" shall mean the period beginning on 159

160 July 1 of any year and ending on June 30 of the next succeeding

161 year.

(p) "Medical board" shall mean the board of physicians or any governmental or non-governmental disability determination service designated by the board of trustees that is qualified to make disability determinations as provided for in Section 25-11-119.

167 (q) "Member" shall mean any person included in the168 membership of the system as provided in Section 25-11-105.

169 (r) "Membership service" shall mean service as an170 employee rendered while a member of the retirement system.

(s) "Position" means any office or any employment in the state service, or two (2) or more of them, the duties of which call for services to be rendered by one (1) person, including positions jointly employed by federal and state agencies administering federal and state funds.

(t) "Prior service" shall mean service rendered before
February 1, 1953, for which credit is allowable under Sections
25-11-105 and 25-11-109, and which shall allow prior service for
any person who is now or becomes a member of the Public Employees'
Retirement System and who does contribute to the system for a
minimum period of four (4) years.

(u) "Regular interest" shall mean interest compounded
annually at such a rate as shall be determined by the board in
accordance with Section 25-11-121.

185 "Retirement allowance" shall mean an annuity for (v) 186 life as provided in this article, payable each year in twelve (12) 187 equal monthly installments beginning as of the date fixed by the board. The retirement allowance shall be calculated in accordance 188 189 with Section 25-11-111. Provided, any spouse who received a 190 spouse retirement benefit in accordance with Section 25-11-111(d) 191 prior to March 31, 1971, and said benefits were terminated because of eligibility for a Social Security benefit, may again receive 192 193 his spouse retirement benefit from and after making application

194 with the board of trustees to reinstate such spouse retirement 195 benefit.

(w) "Retroactive service" shall mean service rendered
after February 1, 1953, for which credit is allowable under
Section 25-11-105(b) and Section 25-11-105(k).

(x) "System" shall mean the Public Employees'
Retirement System of Mississippi established and described in
Section 25-11-101.

(y) "State" shall mean the State of Mississippi or anypolitical subdivision thereof or instrumentality thereof.

204 "State service" shall mean all offices and (z) 205 positions of trust or employment in the employ of the state, or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof, which elect 206 207 to participate as provided by Section 25-11-105 (f), including the position of elected or fee officials of the counties and their 208 209 deputies and employees performing public services or any 210 department, independent agency, board or commission thereof, and shall also include all offices and positions of trust or 211 212 employment in the employ of joint state and federal agencies administering state and federal funds and service rendered by 213 214 employees of the public schools. Effective July 1, 1973, all 215 nonprofessional public school employees, such as bus drivers, 216 janitors, maids, maintenance workers and cafeteria employees, 217 shall have the option to become members in accordance with Section 25-11-105(b), and shall be eligible to receive credit for services 218 219 prior to July 1, 1973, provided the contributions and interest are 220 paid by the employee in accordance with that section; provided 221 further, that the county or municipal separate school district may 222 pay the employer contribution and pro rate share of interest of 223 the retroactive service from available funds. From and after July 224 1, 1998, retroactive service credit shall be purchased at the actuarial cost in accordance with Section 25-11-105(b). Public 225 226 school bus drivers shall be eligible to become or remain members

227 <u>of the retirement system regardless of the number of hours per</u> 228 <u>week or per month for which they receive compensation.</u>

(aa) "Withdrawal from service" shall mean complete
severance of employment in the state service of any member by
resignation, dismissal or discharge.

(bb) The masculine pronoun, wherever used, shallinclude the feminine pronoun.

234 SECTION 2. Section 25-11-105, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 235 amended as follows:

23625-11-105.I. THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP237The membership of this retirement system shall be composed as

238 follows:

(a) All persons who shall become employees in the state
service after January 31, 1953, and whose wages are subject to
payroll taxes and are lawfully reported on IRS Form W-2, except
those specifically excluded, or as to whom election is provided in
Articles 1 and 3, shall become members of the retirement system as
a condition of their employment.

245 (b) All persons who shall become employees in the state service after January 31, 1953, except those specifically excluded 246 247 or as to whom election is provided in Articles 1 and 3, unless 248 they shall file with the board prior to the lapse of sixty (60) 249 days of employment or sixty (60) days after the effective date of 250 the cited articles, whichever is later, on a form prescribed by the board, a notice of election not to be covered by the 251 252 membership of the retirement system and a duly executed waiver of all present and prospective benefits which would otherwise inure 253 254 to them on account of their participation in the system, shall 255 become members of the retirement system; provided, however, that 256 no credit for prior service will be granted to members until they 257 have contributed to Article 3 of the retirement system for a minimum period of at least four (4) years. Such members shall 258 259 receive credit for services performed prior to January 1, 1953, in

employment now covered by Article 3, but no credit shall be 260 granted for retroactive services between January 1, 1953, and the 261 262 date of their entry into the retirement system unless the employee pays into the retirement system both the employer's and the 263 264 employee's contributions on wages paid him during the period from January 31, 1953, to the date of his becoming a contributing 265 266 member, together with interest at the rate determined by the board 267 of trustees. Members reentering after withdrawal from service 268 shall qualify for prior service under the provisions of Section 269 25-11-117. From and after July 1, 1998, upon eligibility as noted 270 above, the member may receive credit for such retroactive service 271 provided:

(1) The member shall furnish proof satisfactory to the board of trustees of certification of such service from the covered employer where the services were performed; and

(2) The member shall pay to the retirement system on the date he or she is eligible for such credit or at any time thereafter prior to the date of retirement the actuarial cost for each year of such creditable service. The provisions of this subparagraph (2) shall be subject to the limitations of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations promulgated thereunder.

Nothing contained in this paragraph (b) shall be construed to limit the authority of the board to allow the correction of reporting errors or omissions based on the payment of the employee and employer contributions plus applicable interest.

(c) All persons who shall become employees in the state service after January 31, 1953, and who are eligible for membership in any other retirement system shall become members of this retirement system as a condition of their employment unless they elect at the time of their employment to become a member of such other system.

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(d) All persons who are employees in the state service

293 on January 31, 1953, and who are members of any nonfunded 294 retirement system operated by the State of Mississippi, or any of 295 its departments or agencies, shall become members of this system 296 with prior service credit unless, before February 1, 1953, they 297 shall file a written notice with the board of trustees that they 298 do not elect to become members.

299 (e) All persons who are employees in the state service 300 on January 31, 1953, and who under existing laws are members of 301 any fund operated for the retirement of employees by the State of 302 Mississippi, or any of its departments or agencies, shall not be entitled to membership in this retirement system unless, before 303 304 February 1, 1953, any such person shall indicate by a notice filed with the board, on a form prescribed by the board, his individual 305 306 election and choice to participate in this system, but no such 307 person shall receive prior service credit unless he becomes a 308 member on or before February 1, 1953.

309 (f) Each political subdivision of the state and each instrumentality of the state or a political subdivision, or both, 310 311 is hereby authorized to submit, for approval by the board of trustees, a plan for extending the benefits of this article to 312 313 employees of any such political subdivision or instrumentality. Each such plan or any amendment to the plan for extending benefits 314 315 thereof shall be approved by the board of trustees if it finds 316 that such plan, or such plan as amended, is in conformity with such requirements as are provided in Articles 1 and 3; however, 317 318 upon approval of such plan or any such plan heretofore approved by 319 the board of trustees, the approved plan shall not be subject to cancellation or termination by the political subdivision or 320 321 instrumentality. No such plan shall be approved unless:

(1) It provides that all services which constitute
employment as defined in Section 25-11-5 and are performed in the
employ of the political subdivision or instrumentality, by any
employees thereof, shall be covered by the plan; with the

326 exception of municipal employees who are already covered by 327 existing retirement plans; provided, however, those employees in 328 this class may elect to come under the provisions of this article;

329 (2) It specifies the source or sources from which
330 the funds necessary to make the payments required by subsection
331 (d) of Section 25-11-123 and of subsections (f)(5)b and c of this
332 section are expected to be derived and contains reasonable
333 assurance that such sources will be adequate for such purpose;

(3) It provides for such methods of administration of the plan by the political subdivision or instrumentality as are found by the board of trustees to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration thereof;

338 (4) It provides that the political subdivision or 339 instrumentality will make such reports, in such form and 340 containing such information, as the board of trustees may from 341 time to time require;

342 (5) It authorizes the board of trustees to 343 terminate the plan in its entirety in the discretion of the board 344 if it finds that there has been a failure to comply substantially 345 with any provision contained in such plan, such termination to 346 take effect at the expiration of such notice and on such 347 conditions as may be provided by regulations of the board and as 348 may be consistent with applicable federal law.

349 The board of trustees shall not finally Α. refuse to approve a plan submitted under subsection (f), and shall 350 351 not terminate an approved plan without reasonable notice and opportunity for hearing to each political subdivision or 352 353 instrumentality affected thereby. The board's decision in any 354 such case shall be final, conclusive and binding unless an appeal be taken by the political subdivision or instrumentality aggrieved 355 356 thereby to the Circuit Court of Hinds County, Mississippi, in 357 accordance with the provisions of law with respect to civil causes 358 by certiorari.

B. Each political subdivision or instrumentality as to which a plan has been approved under this section shall pay into the contribution fund, with respect to wages (as defined in Section 25-11-5), at such time or times as the board of trustees may by regulation prescribe, contributions in the amounts and at the rates specified in the applicable agreement entered into by the board.

366 C. Every political subdivision or 367 instrumentality required to make payments under subsection (f)(5)b 368 hereof is authorized, in consideration of the employees' retention in or entry upon employment after enactment of Articles 1 and 3, 369 370 to impose upon its employees, as to services which are covered by 371 an approved plan, a contribution with respect to wages (as defined in Section 25-11-5) not exceeding the amount provided in Section 372 25-11-123(d) if such services constituted employment within the 373 374 meaning of Articles 1 and 3, and to deduct the amount of such 375 contribution from the wages as and when paid. Contributions so collected shall be paid into the contribution fund as partial 376 377 discharge of the liability of such political subdivisions or instrumentality under subsection (f)(5)b hereof. Failure to 378 379 deduct such contribution shall not relieve the employee or employer of liability thereof. 380

Any state agency, school, political 381 D. 382 subdivision, instrumentality or any employer that is required to 383 submit contribution payments or wage reports under any section of 384 this chapter shall be assessed interest on delinquent payments or wage reports as determined by the board of trustees in accordance 385 with rules and regulations adopted by the board and such assessed 386 interest may be recovered by action in a court of competent 387 388 jurisdiction against such reporting agency liable therefor or may, 389 upon due certification of delinquency and at the request of the board of trustees, be deducted from any other monies payable to 390 391 such reporting agency by any department or agency of the state.

E. Each political subdivision of the state and each instrumentality of the state or a political subdivision or subdivisions which submits a plan for approval of the board, as provided in this section, shall reimburse the board for coverage into the expense account, its pro rate share of the total expense of administering Articles 1 and 3 as provided by regulations of said board.

The board may, in its discretion, deny the right of 399 (g) 400 membership in this system to any class of employees whose 401 compensation is only partly paid by the state or who are occupying 402 positions on a part-time or intermittent basis. The board may, in 403 its discretion, make optional with employees in any such classes 404 their individual entrance into this system. However, the board may not deny the right of membership in the system to public 405 406 school bus drivers.

407 (h) An employee whose membership in this system is
408 contingent on his own election, and who elects not to become a
409 member, may thereafter apply for and be admitted to membership;
410 but no such employee shall receive prior service credit unless he
411 becomes a member prior to July 1, 1953, except as provided in
412 subsection (b).

413 In the event any member of this system should (i) 414 change his employment to any agency of the state having an 415 actuarially funded retirement system, the board of trustees may authorize the transfer of the member's creditable service and of 416 417 the present value of the member's employer's accumulation account and of the present value of the member's accumulated membership 418 contributions to such other system, provided the employee agrees 419 420 to the transfer of his accumulated membership contributions and 421 provided such other system is authorized to receive and agrees to 422 make such transfer.

In the event any member of any other actuarially funded system maintained by an agency of the state changes his employment

425 to an agency covered by this system, the board of trustees may 426 authorize the receipt of the transfer of the member's creditable 427 service and of the present value of the member's employer's accumulation account and of the present value of the member's 428 429 accumulated membership contributions from such other system, 430 provided the employee agrees to the transfer of his accumulated 431 membership contributions to this system and provided the other system is authorized and agrees to make such transfer. 432

(j) Wherever herein state employment is referred to, it
shall include joint employment by state and federal agencies of
all kinds.

436 (k) Employees of a political subdivision or 437 instrumentality who were employed by such political subdivision or 438 instrumentality prior to an agreement between such entity and the Public Employees' Retirement System to extend the benefits of this 439 440 article to its employees, and which agreement provides for the 441 establishment of retroactive service credit, and who have been members of the retirement system and have remained contributors to 442 443 the retirement system for four (4) years, may receive credit for 444 such retroactive service with such political subdivision or 445 instrumentality, provided the employee and/or employer, as provided under the terms of the modification of the joinder 446 447 agreement in allowing such coverage, pay into the retirement 448 system the employer's and employee's contributions on wages paid 449 the member during such previous employment, together with interest 450 or actuarial cost as determined by the board covering the period 451 from the date the service was rendered until the payment for the 452 credit for such service was made. Such wages shall be verified by 453 the Social Security Administration or employer payroll records. Effective July 1, 1998, upon eligibility as noted above, a member 454 455 may receive credit for such retroactive service with such political subdivision or instrumentality provided; 456

(1) The member shall furnish proof satisfactory to

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458 the board of trustees of certification of such services from the 459 political subdivision or instrumentality where the services were 460 rendered or verification by the Social Security Administration; 461 and

(2) The member shall pay to the retirement system on the date he or she is eligible for such credit or at any time thereafter prior to the date of retirement the actuarial cost for each year of such creditable service. The provisions of this subparagraph (2) shall be subject to the limitations of Section 415 of the Internal Revenue Code and regulations promulgated thereunder.

469 Nothing contained in this paragraph (k) shall be construed to 470 limit the authority of the board to allow the correction of 471 reporting errors or omissions based on the payment of employee and 472 employer contributions plus applicable interest. Payment for such 473 time shall be made in increments of not less than one-quarter 474 (1/4) year of creditable service beginning with the most recent service. Upon the payment of all or part of such required 475 476 contributions, plus interest or the actuarial cost as provided above, the member shall receive credit for the period of 477 478 creditable service for which full payment has been made to the 479 retirement system.

Through June 30, 1998, any state service eligible 480 (1) 481 for retroactive service credit, no part of which has ever been 482 reported, and requiring the payment of employee and employer 483 contributions plus interest, or, from and after July 1, 1998, any 484 state service eligible for retroactive service credit, no part of 485 which has ever been reported to the retirement system, and requiring the payment of the actuarial cost for such creditable 486 487 service, may, at the member's option, be purchased in quarterly 488 increments as provided above at such time as its purchase is otherwise allowed. 489

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(m) All rights to purchase retroactive service credit

491 or repay a refund as provided in Section 25-11-101 et seq. shall 492 terminate upon retirement.

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II. THOSE WHO ARE NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP

The following classes of employees and officers shall not become members of this retirement system, any other provisions of Articles 1 and 3 to the contrary notwithstanding:

497 (a) Patient or inmate help in state charitable, penal498 or correctional institutions;

(b) Students of any state educational institution employed by any agency of the state for temporary, part-time or intermittent work;

502 (c) Participants of Comprehensive Employment and
503 Training Act of 1973 (CETA) being Public Law 93-203, who enroll on
504 or after July 1, 1979.

505 **II**

III. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

506 Membership in this system shall cease by a member withdrawing 507 his accumulated contributions, or by a member withdrawing from 508 active service with a retirement allowance, or by a member's 509 death.

510 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from 511 and after July 1, 1999.