

By: Representative Manning

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1342

1 AN ACT RELATING TO SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SAFETY; TO
2 REQUIRE THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TO APPOINT A
3 TASK FORCE TO STUDY SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND SCHOOL SAFETY ISSUES AND
4 TO SUBMIT A REPORT OF ITS FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
5 LEGISLATURE BEFORE THE 2000 SESSION; TO PROVIDE FOR THE
6 APPOINTMENT OF A RAPID RESPONSE TEAM WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT
7 OF EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING ON SITE ASSISTANCE TO
8 LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS DURING SCHOOL EMERGENCIES; TO REQUIRE THE
9 STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A PILOT PROGRAM UNDER
10 WHICH GRANTS ARE AWARDED TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR THE PURPOSE
11 OF ESTABLISHING A TOLL FREE LOCAL SCHOOL SAFETY HOTLINE; TO
12 REQUIRE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO ESTABLISH A PILOT
13 PROGRAM UNDER WHICH GRANTS ARE AWARDED TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS
14 FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYING SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS; TO REQUIRE
15 LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO REPORT ALL ACTS OF SCHOOL VIOLENCE TO
16 THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

18 SECTION 1. The State Superintendent of Public Education
19 shall appoint a task force to study school violence and school
20 safety issues relating to the public schools of Mississippi. The
21 task force shall be comprised of the following members:

- 22 (a) An employee or employees of the State Department of
23 Education knowledgeable about school violence and safety issues;
24 (b) Representatives of law enforcement agencies;
25 (c) A child psychiatrist or psychologist;
26 (d) A local school district superintendent;
27 (e) A principal of a local school;
28 (f) A teacher from a local school district;
29 (g) The administrator of an alternative school program;

30 and

- 31 (h) Representatives of any other organizations or
32 associations deemed appropriate by the State Board of Education.

33 The task force shall study the problems surrounding violence

34 in the schools and shall explore possible means to alleviate such
35 violence and increase school safety. Before November 1, 1999, the
36 task force shall submit a written report of its findings and
37 recommendations to the Education Committees of the House of
38 Representatives and the Senate.

39 SECTION 2. The State Superintendent of Public Education
40 shall establish a "Rapid Response Team" within the State
41 Department of Education. The team shall be comprised of
42 department employees who, upon the direction of the
43 superintendent, shall respond on site to school safety emergencies
44 resulting from acts of violence occurring within a school or at a
45 school-related event. The Rapid Response Team shall provide
46 assistance to a school district and the community during a school
47 crisis resulting from an act of violence and shall work with the
48 school district to develop a plan to provide appropriate
49 counseling services to students and school personnel.

50 SECTION 3. The State Department of Education shall implement
51 a pilot program under which a "local school safety hotline" shall
52 be established in certain school districts. The local school
53 safety hotline shall be an incoming toll free telephone number
54 within those school districts participating in the program which
55 shall be available for persons in the district to immediately
56 report acts of school violence to the appropriate school
57 officials. Under the pilot program, the State Department of
58 Education shall award grants to participating school districts for
59 the purpose of establishing and operating the local school safety
60 hotline. The department shall prescribe rules and regulations for
61 participation in the program, including application requirements.
62 In selecting participants, special consideration shall be given
63 to those districts characterized by a high incidence of school
64 violence.

65 SECTION 4. The State Department of Education shall establish
66 and implement a pilot program under which grants are awarded to
67 local school districts for the purpose of employing school
68 resource officers. The department shall prescribe the duties of
69 the school resource officers and rules and regulations for
70 participation in the pilot program, including application

71 requirements. In selecting participants, special consideration
72 shall be given to those school districts characterized by a high
73 incidence of school violence.

74 SECTION 5. The State Department of Education shall develop a
75 central reporting system for maintaining information concerning
76 acts of school violence. In establishing and maintaining the
77 system, the department shall require each school district to
78 report each act of violence occurring on school property or at a
79 school-related event. The department shall develop a form for the
80 reporting of such events and shall prescribe the specific
81 information that must be reported concerning each act of school
82 violence. Any information maintained by the department under this
83 section shall be confidential and shall not be available to the
84 general public.

85 SECTION 6. This act shall take effect and be in force from
86 and after July 1, 1999.