By: Stevens, Capps, Barbour, Chism, Coleman (65th), Dedeaux, Formby, Montgomery (74th), Nicholson, Robinson (84th), Horne

To: Insurance

## HOUSE BILL NO. 620 (As Passed the House)

AN ACT TO STRENGTHEN THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE MISSISSIPPI MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITY LAW; TO AMEND SECTION 63-15-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT THIS CHAPTER SHALL BE 3 4 KNOWN AS THE "MISSISSIPPI MOTOR VEHICLE COMPULSORY SAFETY-RESPONSIBILITY LAW"; TO AMEND SECTION 63-3-411, MISSISSIPPI 5 CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE THAT INVESTIGATING LAW ENFORCEMENT 6 7 OFFICERS SHALL FURNISH ALL DRIVERS INVOLVED IN CERTAIN ACCIDENTS WITH ACCIDENT REPORT FORMS; TO REQUIRE THE INVESTIGATING OFFICERS 9 TO SUBMIT THEIR WRITTEN REPORTS TO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY WITHIN TEN WORKING DAYS AFTER THE DATE OF THE ACCIDENT; TO PROVIDE 10 FOR AN ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY ON THE APPROPRIATE LAW ENFORCEMENT 11 AGENCY THAT DOES NOT COMPLY; TO AMEND SECTION 63-15-9, MISSISSIPPI 12 CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT REPORT FORM TO 13 NOTIFY CERTAIN DRIVERS THAT FAILURE TO FILE THE REPORT OR FAILURE 14 15 TO HAVE MOTOR VEHICLE LIABILITY INSURANCE OR OTHERWISE SHOW FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY UP TO THE LIABILITY LIMITS SET BY LAW MAY 16 SUBJECT THEM TO AN ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTY IN ADDITION TO LICENSE 17 18 SUSPENSION; TO AMEND SECTION 63-15-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGES BEFORE REQUIRING FINANCIAL 19 20 RESPONSIBILITY; TO PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES 21 FOR FAILURE TO SHOW FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY; TO PROVIDE FOR A 22 WAIVER OF PENALTIES UPON PROOF OF PURCHASE OF MOTOR VEHICLE 23 LIABILITY INSURANCE; TO AMEND SECTION 63-15-69, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE FOR CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE PENALTIES ON 24 25 PERSONS FAILING TO FILE REPORTS OF ACCIDENTS; TO AMEND SECTIONS 45-1-5, 63-1-52 AND 83-11-101, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN 26 CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES. 2.7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI: 28 SECTION 1. Section 63-15-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 29 30 amended as follows:[BD1] 63-15-1. This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the 31 "Mississippi Motor Vehicle Compulsory Safety-Responsibility Law." 32 33 SECTION 2. Section 63-3-411, Mississippi Code of 1972, is

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- 34 amended as follows:
- 35 63-3-411. (1) The driver of a vehicle involved in an
- 36 accident resulting in injury to or death of any person or total
- 37 property damage to an apparent extent of Five Hundred Dollars
- 38 (\$500.00) or more shall immediately, by the quickest means of
- 39 communication, give notice of the collision to the local police
- 40 department if the collision occurs within an incorporated
- 41 municipality, or if the collision occurs outside of an
- 42 incorporated municipality to the nearest sheriff's office or
- 43 highway patrol station.
- 44 (2) <u>All</u> drivers of vehicles involved in an accident
- 45 resulting in injury to or death of any person or total property
- damage to an apparent extent of <a href="One Thousand Dollars">One Thousand Dollars</a> (\$1,000.00)
- 47 or more shall forward within <u>fifteen (15) working</u> days after such
- 48 accident, a written report of such accident to the department.
- 49 The investigating officer shall furnish all drivers an accident
- 50 report form as provided in Section 63-15-9 and shall provide to
- 51 <u>such drivers instructions as to when such report must be completed</u>
- 52 <u>and submitted to the department.</u>
- 53 (3) The department may require any driver of a vehicle
- 54 involved in an accident, of which report must be made as provided
- 55 in this section, to file supplemental reports whenever the
- original report is insufficient in the opinion of the department.
- 57 Additionally, the department may require witnesses of accidents to
- 58 render reports to the department.
- 59 (4) It shall be the duty of the highway patrol or the
- 60 sheriff's office to investigate all accidents required to be
- 61 reported by this section when the accident occurs outside the
- 62 corporate limits of a municipality, and it shall be the duty of
- 63 the police department of each municipality to investigate all
- 64 accidents required to be reported by this section when the

65 accidents occur within the corporate limits of the municipality.

Every law enforcement officer who investigates an accident as

67 required by this subsection, whether the investigation is made at

- 68 the scene of the accident or by subsequent investigation and
- 69 interviews, shall forward within ten (10) working days after the
- 70 <u>date of the accident</u> a written report of the accident to the
- 71 department if the accident occurred outside the corporate limits
- 72 of a municipality, or to the police department of the municipality
- 73 if the accident occurred within the corporate limits of such
- 74 municipality. Police departments shall forward such reports to
- 75 the department within ten (10) working days of the date of the
- 76 accident. If the appropriate law enforcement agency fails to
- 77 submit the reports as required by this subsection or to furnish
- 78 the accident report forms to the drivers as required in subsection
- 79 (2) of this section, then the department shall assess the agency
- 80 with an administrative penalty of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00).
- 81 Any agency so penalized may make a written request to the
- 82 <u>department for a hearing. Such hearing shall be held in</u>
- 83 accordance with rules and regulations that are adopted by the
- 84 <u>department and that are in compliance with due process of law.</u>
- 85 The funds from such penalties collected by the Department of
- 86 Public Safety shall be deposited in the State General Fund in the
- 87 State Treasury and shall be subject to the annual legislative
- 88 appropriation process.
- 89 (5) The Department of Public Safety shall develop procedures
- 90 to ensure that the reports required by this section are made a
- 91 part of the files of the department.
- 92 (6) Whenever an engineer of a railroad locomotive, or other

- 93 person in charge of a train, is required to show proof of his
- 94 identity under the provisions of this article, in connection with
- 95 operation of such locomotive, to any law enforcement officer, such
- 96 person shall not be required to display his operator's or
- 97 chauffeur's license but shall display his railroad employee
- 98 number.
- 99 (7) In addition to the information required on the
- 100 "statewide uniform traffic accident report" forms provided by
- 101 Section 63-3-415, the department shall require the parties
- 102 involved in an accident and the witnesses of such accident to
- 103 furnish their phone numbers in order to assist the investigation
- 104 by law enforcement officers.
- SECTION 3. Section 63-15-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 106 amended as follows:
- 107 63-15-9. The operator of every motor vehicle which is in any
- 108 manner involved in an accident within this state, in which any
- 109 person is killed or injured or in which damage to the property of
- 110 any one (1) person, other than himself, in excess of One Thousand
- 111 <u>Dollars (\$1,000.00)</u> is sustained, shall within <u>fifteen (15)</u>
- 112 working days after such accident report the matter in writing to
- 113 the department, in accordance with the laws of this state. Such
- 114 report, the form of which shall be prescribed by the department,
- 115 shall contain information to enable the department to determine
- 116 whether the requirements for the deposit of security under Section
- 117 63-15-11 are inapplicable by reason of the existence of insurance
- 118 or other exceptions specified in this chapter. The reports
- 119 required herein shall be furnished to each of the drivers involved
- 120 <u>in an accident as provided in Section 63-3-411</u>. Such report shall

121	contain, but not be limited to, the following notification and
122	request for information:
123	"It is compulsory that you complete and mail the SR-1 (short
124	form) motor vehicle accident report to the Department of Public
125	Safety, Safety Responsibility Branch, within fifteen (15) working
126	days of the date of this accident.
127	Failure to file the report within fifteen (15) working days
128	of receipt of this form shall subject you to an administrative
129	penalty of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) and the immediate
130	suspension of your driving privilege or registration, or both.
131	Upon payment of the administrative penalty and completion of the
132	report, your driving privilege or registration, or both, may be
133	reinstated, unless otherwise provided by law.
134	If you did not have motor vehicle liability insurance or
135	cannot otherwise show financial responsibility on the date of this
136	accident up to the liability limits set by law, you may be subject
137	to the suspension of your driving privilege or registration, or
138	both, and a Two Hundred Dollar (\$200.00) administrative penalty.
139	Such penalty may be waived and driving privilege or registration,
140	or both, reinstated if, within thirty (30) working days, you show
141	certified proof of purchase of motor vehicle liability insurance
142	in accordance with the requirements of the department.
143	On the day of the accident was the vehicle involved covered
144	by motor vehicle liability insurance? Yes No
145	Name of insurance company:
146	<pre>Insurance policy number:</pre>
147	Name of insurance agency:
148	Was anyone seriously injured? Yes No

149	Approximate cost to repair your vehicle:
150	Name of driver:
151	Driver's license number:
152	*Address of driver:
153	Name of person completing report:
154	<u>Date:</u>
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156	Signature of investigating officer
157	certifying that all drivers received
158	the SR-1 motor vehicle accident
159	<u>report</u>
160	*All drivers shall report a change of address to the
161	Department of Public Safety within five (5) working days of such
162	change."
163	Any written report of an accident in accordance with Article
164	9 of Chapter 3 of this title shall be sufficient, provided it also
165	contains the information required herein. The department may rely
166	upon the accuracy of the information unless and until it has
167	reason to believe that the information is erroneous. If such
168	operator be physically incapable of making such report, an
169	occupant in the motor vehicle at the time of the accident or the
170	owner of the motor vehicle shall make such report. The operator,
171	occupant or the owner shall furnish such additional relevant
172	information as the department shall require.
173	SECTION 4. Section 63-15-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
174	amended as follows:
175	63-15-11. (1) If twenty (20) working days after the receipt
176	of a report of a motor vehicle accident in this state which has

resulted in bodily injury or death, or damage to the property of any one (1) person in excess of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00), the department does not have on file evidence satisfactory to it that the person who would otherwise be required to file security under subsection (2) of this section has been finally adjudicated not to be liable, or has executed a duly acknowledged written agreement providing for the payment of an agreed amount in installments with respect to all claims for injuries or damages resulting from the accident, the department shall determine the amount of security which shall be sufficient in its judgment to satisfy any judgment or judgments for damages resulting from such accident as may be recovered against each operator or owner.

(2) The department, after all provisions of Sections

63-3-411 and 63-15-9 have been complied with by the proper authorities, shall levy an administrative penalty of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) upon each owner and suspend the license of each operator and all registrations of each owner of a motor vehicle in any manner involved in such accident, and if such operator is a nonresident the privilege of operating a motor vehicle within this state, and if such owner is a nonresident the privilege of the use within this state of any motor vehicle owned by him, unless such operator or owner or both shall deposit security in the sum so determined by the department and shall also furnish proof of financial responsibility. Notice of such suspension and administrative penalty shall be sent by the department to such operator and owner not less than ten (10) working days before the effective date of such suspension and administrative penalty and shall state the amount required as security. If such operator,

205 within thirty (30) working days of such notification, shows 206 certified proof of purchase of motor vehicle liability insurance 207 in the manner and the amounts required by law, his driving 208 privilege may be reinstated. If such owner, within thirty (30) 209 working days of such notification, shows certified proof of 210 purchase of motor vehicle liability insurance in the manner and 211 the amounts required by law, the administrative penalty may be waived and his registration may be reinstated. Where erroneous 212 213 information is given the department with respect to the matters 214 set forth in subdivisions (1), (2) and (3) of subsection (4) of 215 this section, it shall take appropriate action as hereinbefore 216 provided after receipt by it of correct information with respect 217 to <u>such</u> matters. 218 (3) Any person so notified of suspension and administrative penalty, in accordance with notification requirements in Section 219 220 63-1-52, may, within ten (10) working days after receipt of such 221 notification, make a written request to the department for a 222 hearing, and such request shall operate as a stay of any 223 suspension and administrative penalty pending the outcome of such 224 hearing. For the purposes of this section, the scope of such hearing shall cover the issues of whether there is a reasonable 225 226 probability of a judgment being rendered against such person in a 227 lawsuit arising out of the accident and whether such person is 228 exempt from the requirement of depositing security under 229 subsection (4) of this section. At such hearing the department 230 may also consider the amount of security required to be deposited, 231 if any. The hearing shall be in accordance with rules and 232 regulations which shall be adopted by the department and furnished 233 to the operator or owner with the notice of suspension and 234 administrative penalty. For the purposes of this section, a 235 "hearing" may consist of a determination of such issues by the 236 department based solely on written reports submitted by the 237 operator or owner and by investigatory officers, provided that the 238 owner or operator, in his request to the department for a hearing, 239 has expressly consented to such type hearing and that the 240 department has consented thereto. 241 Any person whose suspension and administrative penalty has 242 been sustained shall have the right to appeal as provided in 243 Section 63-15-7. However, such suspension shall not be stayed by 244 the department or any court while such appeal is pending. 245 Subsections (1) and (2) of this section shall not apply: (4)(1) to such operator or owner if such owner had in effect at the 246 247 time of such accident a liability policy with respect to the motor vehicle involved in such accident; (2) to such operator, if not 248 249 the owner of such motor vehicle, if there was in effect at the 250 time of such accident a liability policy with respect to his operation of motor vehicles not owned by him; (3) to such operator 251 252 or owner if the liability of such operator or owner for damages 253 resulting from such accident is, in the judgment of the 254 department, covered by any other form of liability insurance 255 policy or bond of a surety company authorized to do business in 256 this state; (4) to any person qualifying as a self-insurer under 257 Section 63-15-53, or to any person operating a motor vehicle for 258 such self-insurer; (5) to the operator or the owner of a motor vehicle legally parked at the time of the accident; (6) to the 259

owner of a motor vehicle if at the time of the accident the

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vehicle was stolen; or (7) to any person for whom the department 261 262 has found in the hearing provided for in subsection (3) of this 263 section, that there is not a reasonable probability of a judgment 264

being rendered against such person in a lawsuit arising out of the

265 accident.

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No such policy shall be effective under this section unless issued by an insurance company or surety company authorized to write motor vehicle liability insurance in this state, except that if such motor vehicle was not registered in this state, or was a motor vehicle which was registered elsewhere than in this state at the effective date of the policy or the most recent renewal thereof, such policy shall not be effective under this section unless the insurance company or surety company if not authorized to do business in this state shall execute a power of attorney authorizing the department to accept service on its behalf of notice or process in any action upon such policy arising out of such accident. However, every such policy shall be subject to the <u>limits provided in Section 63-15-3</u>.

SECTION 5. Section 63-15-69, Mississippi Code of 1972, is 279 280 amended as follows:

63-15-69. (1) Where any person fails to report an accident as required in Section 63-15-9, in addition to any other penalties prescribed by law, the department shall <u>administer an</u> administrative penalty of Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) upon and suspend the license of the person failing to make such report, or the nonresident's operating privilege of such person, until such report has been filed and the administrative penalty and any reinstatement fees paid. The funds from any administrative

- penalties collected by the Department of Public Safety under this

  subsection shall be deposited in the State General Fund in the

  State Treasury.
- 292 (2) Any person who gives information required in a report or otherwise as provided for in Section 63-15-9, knowing or having 293 reason to believe that such information is false, or who shall 294 forge, or without authority, sign any evidence of proof of 295 296 financial responsibility, or who files or offers for filing any 297 such evidence of proof, knowing or having reason to believe that 298 it is forged or signed without authority, shall be fined not more 299 than One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisoned for not more 300 than one (1) year, or both, except where the statement may be made 301 under oath, in which case the person making the false statement 302 under oath shall, upon conviction, be subject to the penalties for 303 perjury.
- 304 (3) Any person whose license or nonresident's operating 305 privilege has been suspended or revoked under this chapter, and 306 who, during such suspension or revocation drives any motor vehicle 307 upon any highway or knowingly permits any motor vehicle owned by 308 such person to be operated by another upon any highway, except as 309 permitted under this chapter, shall be fined not more than Five 310 Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or imprisoned not exceeding six (6) 311 months, or both.
- 312 (4) Any person wilfully failing to return his license as
  313 required in Section 63-15-67, shall be fined not more than Five
  314 Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or imprisoned not to exceed thirty (30)
  315 days, or both.
- 316 (5) Any person who shall violate any provision of this

- 317 chapter for which no penalty is otherwise provided shall be fined
- 318 not more than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) or imprisoned not
- 319 more than six (6) months, or both.
- 320 SECTION 6. Section 45-1-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 321 amended as follows:
- 322 45-1-5. The Commissioner of Public Safety is authorized and
- 323 empowered to employ such administrative, professional, technical,
- 324 stenographic, clerical and other employees as may be necessary to
- 325 perform the duties of the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol to
- 326 comply with the provisions of the Mississippi Motor Vehicle
- 327 <u>Compulsory</u> Safety-Responsibility Law, being Chapter 15 of Title 63
- 328 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, and to perform the duties under
- 329 all other laws required to be administered under the supervision
- 330 of the commissioner. The commissioner shall fix the salaries of
- 331 all such employees where such salaries are not otherwise fixed by
- 332 law.
- 333 SECTION 7. Section 63-1-52, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
- 334 amended as follows:
- 335 63-1-52. (1) Whenever the Commissioner of Public Safety
- 336 suspends, cancels or revokes the driver's license or driving
- 337 privileges of any person, notice of the suspension, cancellation
- 338 or revocation shall be given to such person by the commissioner,
- 339 or his duly authorized agent, in the manner provided in subsection
- 340 (2) of this section and at the time provided in subsection (3) of
- 341 this section or in the manner and at the time provided in
- 342 subsection (4) of this section.
- 343 (2) Notice shall be given in the following manner:
- 344 (a) In writing, (i) by United States Certificate of

345 Mail; or (ii) by personal service at the person's address as it 346 appears on the driving record maintained by the Department of 347 Public Safety or at the person's last known address; or (iii) by 348 personal notice being given by any law enforcement officer of this 349 state or any duly authorized agent of the Commissioner of Public 350 Safety on forms prescribed and furnished by the Commissioner of 351 Public Safety; whenever a person's driver's license or driving 352 privileges are suspended, revoked or cancelled in accordance with 353 the Mississippi Driver License Compact Law, the Mississippi Implied Consent Law, the Mississippi Motor Vehicle Compulsory 354 355 Safety Responsibility Law or paragraphs (2)(c), (2)(d), (2)(e) or 356 (2)(f) of Section 63-1-53.

- 357 (b) In writing, by United States first class mail,
  358 whenever a person's driver's license or driving privileges are
  359 suspended, revoked or cancelled in accordance with the Mississippi
  360 Commercial Driver's License Law, the Youth Court Law, Chapter 23
  361 of Title 43, Mississippi Code of 1972, Section 63-1-45, Section
  362 63-1-51, paragraph (2)(g), (2)(h) or (2)(i) of Section 63-1-53 or
  363 Section 63-9-25.
- 364 (3) Notice shall be given at the following time:
- 365 (a) Before suspension, revocation or cancellation,
  366 whenever a person's driver's license or driving privileges are
  367 suspended, revoked or cancelled in accordance with the Mississippi
  368 Driver License Compact Law, the Mississippi Motor Vehicle
  369 Compulsory Safety Responsibility Law or paragraph (2)(c), (2)(d),
  370 (2)(e) or (2)(f) of Section 63-1-53.
- 371 (b) Unless otherwise specifically provided for by law, 372 at the time of suspension, revocation or cancellation, whenever a

373 person's driver's license or driving privileges are suspended,

374 revoked or cancelled in accordance with the Mississippi Commercial

375 Driver's License Law, the Mississippi Implied Consent Law, the

376 Youth Court Law, Chapter 23 of Title 43, Mississippi Code of 1972,

377 Section 63-1-45, Section 63-1-51, paragraph (2)(g), (2)(h) or

378 (2)(i) of Section 63-1-53 or Section 63-9-25.

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- (4) Whenever the Commissioner of Public Safety suspends, revokes or cancels the driver's license or driving privileges of any person in accordance with some provision of law other than a provision of law referred to in subsections (2) and (3) of this section, and the manner and time for giving notice is not provided for in such law, then notice of such suspension, revocation or cancellation shall be given in the manner and at the time provided for under paragraphs (2)(b) and (3)(b) of this section.
- 387 SECTION 8. Section 83-11-101, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:[BD2]
- 389 83-11-101. (1) No automobile liability insurance policy or 390 contract shall be issued or delivered after January 1, 1967, 391 unless it contains an endorsement or provisions undertaking to pay 392 the insured all sums which he shall be legally entitled to recover 393 as damages for bodily injury or death from the owner or operator 394 of an uninsured motor vehicle, within limits which shall be no 395 less than those set forth in the Mississippi Motor Vehicle 396 <u>Compulsory</u> Safety Responsibility Law, as amended, under provisions 397 approved by the Commissioner of Insurance; however, at the option 398 of the insured, the uninsured motorist limits may be increased to 399 limits not to exceed those provided in the policy of bodily injury

liability insurance of the insured or such lesser limits as the

401 insured elects to carry over the minimum requirement set forth by 402 this section. The coverage herein required shall not be 403 applicable where any insured named in the policy shall reject the 404 coverage in writing and provided further, that unless the named 405 insured requests such coverage in writing, such coverage need not 406 be provided in any renewal policy where the named insured had 407 rejected the coverage in connection with a policy previously 408 issued to him by the same insurer.

(2) No automobile liability insurance policy or contract shall be issued or delivered after January 1, 1980, unless it contains an endorsement or provisions undertaking to pay the insured all sums which he shall be legally entitled to recover as damages for property damage from the owner or operator of an uninsured motor vehicle, within limits which shall be no less than those set forth in the Mississippi Motor Vehicle Compulsory Safety Responsibility Law, as amended, under provisions approved by the Commissioner of Insurance; however, at the option of the insured, the uninsured motorist limits may be increased to limits not to exceed those provided in the policy of property damage liability insurance of the insured or such lesser limits as the insured elects to carry over the minimum requirement set forth by this The coverage herein required shall not be applicable section. where any insured named in the policy shall reject the coverage in writing and provided further, that unless the named insured requests such coverage in writing, such coverage need not be provided in any renewal policy where the named insured had rejected the coverage in connection with a policy previously issued to him by the same insurer.

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- The property damage provision may provide an exclusion for
- 430 the first Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00) of such property damage;
- 431 however, the uninsured motorist provision need not insure any
- 432 liability for property damage, for which loss the policyholder has
- 433 been compensated by insurance or otherwise.
- 434 (3) The insured may reject the property damage liability
- 435 insurance coverage required by subsection (2) and retain the
- 436 bodily injury liability insurance coverage required by subsection
- 437 (1), but if the insured rejects the bodily injury liability
- 438 coverage he may not retain the property damage liability coverage.
- No insured may have property damage liability insurance coverage
- 440 under this section unless he also has bodily injury liability
- 441 insurance coverage under this section.
- SECTION 9. This act shall take effect and be in force from
- 443 and after January 1, 2001.