HOUSE BILL NO. 27

AN ACT TO CREATE NEW SECTION 25-11-126, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE PERSONS WHO ARE RECEIVING A RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE FROM THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM TO BE EMPLOYED AS BUS DRIVERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS AFTER RETIREMENT AND TO CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE DURING THEIR EMPLOYMENT AS BUS DRIVERS IN ADDITION TO RECEIVING THE REGULAR COMPENSATION FOR BUS DRIVERS; TO PROVIDE THAT THOSE PERSONS SHALL NOT BE CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE RETIREMENT SYSTEM OR RECEIVE ANY CREDITABLE SERVICE FOR THE PERIOD DURING WHICH THEY RECEIVE A RETIREMENT ALLOWANCE DURING THEIR EMPLOYMENT AS BUS DRIVERS; TO AMEND SECTION 25-11-103, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO BECOME OR REMAIN MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC EMPLOYEES' RETIREMENT SYSTEM REGARDLESS OF THE WEEKLY OR MONTHLY NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED; TO AMEND SECTIONS 25-11-105 AND 25-11-127, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CONFORM TO THE PREVIOUS PROVISIONS; TO AMEND SECTION 25-15-3, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CLARIFY THAT BUS DRIVERS EMPLOYED AFTER RETIREMENT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THIS ACT ARE FULL-TIME EMPLOYEES FOR THE PURPOSES OF THE STATE AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN EVEN THOUGH THEY ARE NOT CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE RETIREMENT SYSTEM; TO AMEND SECTION 25-15-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT BUS DRIVERS EMPLOYED AFTER RETIREMENT UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THIS ACT SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO CONTINUE HEALTH INSURANCE AND LIFE INSURANCE COVERAGE UNDER THE PLAN UPON TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT AS A BUS DRIVER, IN THE SAME MANNER AND SUBJECT TO THE SAME LIMITATIONS AS ANY OTHER RETIRED EMPLOYEE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The following shall be codified as Section 25-11-126, Mississippi Code of 1972:

25-11-126. (1) Any person who is receiving a retirement allowance under this article may be employed as a bus driver in any public school district in the state, without any waiting period before beginning employment as a bus driver. Any person employed as a bus driver after retirement under the authority of this section shall continue to receive the retirement allowance under this article during his employment as a bus driver after retirement, in addition to receiving the regular compensation for a bus driver.
(2) Any person employed as a bus driver after retirement under the authority of this section shall not be a contributing member of the retirement system or receive any creditable service for the period during which he receives a retirement allowance during his employment as a bus driver.

SECTION 2. Section 25-11-103, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-11-103. The following words and phrases as used in Articles 1 and 3, unless a different meaning is plainly required by the context, shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Accumulated contributions" shall mean the sum of all the amounts deducted from the compensation of a member and credited to his individual account in the annuity savings account, together with regular interest thereon as provided in Section 25-11-123.

(b) "Actuarial cost" shall mean the amount of funds presently required to provide future benefits as determined by the board based on applicable tables and formulas provided by the actuary.

(c) "Actuarial equivalent" shall mean a benefit of equal value to the accumulated contributions, annuity or benefit, as the case may be, when computed upon the basis of such mortality tables as shall be adopted by the board of trustees, and regular interest.

(d) "Actuarial tables" shall mean such tables of mortality and rates of interest as shall be adopted by the board in accordance with the recommendation of the actuary.

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

(f) "Average compensation" shall mean the average of the four (4) highest years of earned compensation reported for an employee in a fiscal or calendar year period, or combination thereof which do not overlap, or the last forty-eight (48)
consecutive months of earned compensation reported for an
employee. The four (4) years need not be successive or joined
years of service. In no case shall the average compensation so
determined be in excess of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand
Dollars ($125,000.00). In computing the average compensation, any
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
amount which is equal to thirty (30) days of earned compensation
and to the extent that it does not cause the employees' earned
compensation to exceed the maximum reportable amount specified in
Section 25-11-103(k); provided, however, that such thirty-day
limitation shall not prevent the inclusion in the calculation of
leave earned under federal regulations prior to July 1, 1976, and
frozen as of that date as referred to in Section 25-3-99. Only
the amount of lump sum pay for personal leave due and paid upon
the death of a member attributable for up to one hundred fifty
(150) days shall be used in the deceased member's average
compensation calculation in determining the beneficiary's
benefits. In computing the average compensation, no amounts shall
be used which are in excess of the amount on which contributions
were required and paid. If any member who is or has been granted
any increase in annual salary or compensation of more than eight
percent (8%) retires within twenty-four (24) months from the date
that such increase becomes effective, then the board shall exclude
that part of the increase in salary or compensation that exceeds
eight percent (8%) in calculating that member's average
compensation for retirement purposes. The board may enforce this
provision by rule or regulation. However, increases in
compensation in excess of eight percent (8%) per year granted
within twenty-four (24) months of the date of retirement may be
included in such calculation of average compensation if
satisfactory proof is presented to the board showing that the
increase in compensation was the result of an actual change in the
position held or services rendered, or that such compensation increase was authorized by the State Personnel Board or was increased as a result of statutory enactment, and the employer furnishes an affidavit stating that such increase granted within the last twenty-four (24) months was not contingent on a promise or agreement of the employee to retire. Nothing in Section 25-3-31 shall affect the calculation of the average compensation of any member for the purposes of this article. The average compensation of any member who retires before July 1, 1992, shall not exceed the annual salary of the Governor.

(g) "Beneficiary" shall mean any person entitled to receive a retirement allowance, an annuity or other benefit as provided by Articles 1 and 3. In the event of the death prior to retirement of any member whose spouse and/or children are not entitled to a retirement allowance on the basis that the member has less than four (4) years of service credit and/or has not been married for a minimum of one (1) year or the spouse has waived his or her entitlement to a retirement allowance pursuant to Section 25-11-114, the lawful spouse of a member at the time of the death of such member shall be the beneficiary of such member unless the member has designated another beneficiary subsequent to the date of marriage in writing, and filed such writing in the office of the executive director of the board of trustees. No designation or change of beneficiary shall be made in any other manner.

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

(i) "Creditable service" shall mean "prior service," "retroactive service" and all lawfully credited unused leave not exceeding the accrual rates and limitations provided in Section 25-3-91 et seq., as of the date of withdrawal from service plus "membership service" for which credit is allowable as provided in Section 25-11-109. Except to limit creditable service reported to
the system for the purpose of computing an employee's retirement allowance or annuity or benefits provided in this article, nothing in this paragraph shall limit or otherwise restrict the power of the governing authority of a municipality or other political subdivision of the state to adopt such vacation and sick leave 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.

(k) "Earned compensation" shall mean the full amount earned by an employee for a given pay period including any maintenance furnished up to a maximum of One Hundred Twenty-five Thousand Dollars ($125,000.00) per year, and proportionately for less than one (1) year of service. The value of such maintenance when not paid in money shall be fixed by the employing state agency, and, in case of doubt, by the board of trustees as defined in Section 25-11-15. In any case, earned compensation shall be limited to the regular periodic compensation paid, exclusive of litigation fees, bond fees, and other similar extraordinary nonrecurring payments. In addition, any member in a covered position, as defined by Public Employees' Retirement System laws and regulations, who is also employed by another covered agency or political subdivision shall have the earnings of that additional employment reported to the Public Employees' Retirement System regardless of whether the additional employment is sufficient in itself to be a covered position. In the case of fee officials, the net earnings from their office after deduction of expenses shall apply, except that in no case shall earned compensation be less than the total direct payments made by the state or governmental subdivisions to the official, and employer and
employee contributions shall be paid thereon. In the case of
members of the state Legislature, all remuneration or amounts
paid, except mileage allowance, shall apply. The amount by which
an eligible employee's salary is reduced pursuant to a salary
reduction agreement authorized under Section 25-17-5 shall be
included as earned compensation under this paragraph, provided
this inclusion does not conflict with federal law, including
federal regulations and federal administrative interpretations
thereunder, pertaining to the Federal Insurance Contributions Act
or to Internal Revenue Code Section 125 cafeteria plans.
Compensation in addition to an employee's base salary that is paid
to the employee pursuant to the vacation and sick leave policies
of a municipality or other political subdivision of the state that
employs him which exceeds the maximums authorized by Section
25-3-91 et seq., shall be excluded from the calculation of earned
compensation under this article. The maximum salary applicable
for retirement purposes before July 1, 1992, shall be the salary
of the Governor. Nothing in Section 25-3-31 shall affect the
determination of the earned compensation of any member for the
purposes of this article.

(l) "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.

(n) "Executive director" shall mean the secretary to
the board of trustees, as provided in Section 25-11-15(9), and the
administrator of the Public Employees' Retirement System and all
systems under the management of the board of trustees. Wherever
the term "Executive Secretary of the Public Employees' Retirement
System" or "executive secretary" appears in this article or in any
other provision of law, it shall be construed to mean the Executive Director of the Public Employees' Retirement System.

(o) "Fiscal year" shall mean the period beginning on July 1 of any year and ending on June 30 of the next succeeding year.

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

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

(r) "Membership service" shall mean service as an 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. The employer shall determine upon initial employment and during the course of employment of an employee who does not meet the criteria for coverage in the Public Employees' Retirement System based on the position held, whether the employee is or becomes eligible for coverage in the Public Employees' Retirement System based upon any other employment in a covered agency or political subdivision. If or when the employee meets the eligibility criteria for coverage in such other position, then the employer must withhold contributions and report wages from the noncovered position in accordance with the provisions for reporting of earned compensation. Failure to deduct and report those contributions shall not relieve the employee or employer of liability thereof. The board shall adopt such rules and regulations as necessary to implement and enforce this provision.
(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.

(v) "Retirement allowance" shall mean an annuity for life as provided in this article, payable each year in twelve (12) equal monthly installments beginning as of the date fixed by the board. The retirement allowance shall be calculated in accordance with Section 25-11-111. Provided, any spouse who received a spouse retirement benefit in accordance with Section 25-11-111(d) prior to March 31, 1971, and said benefits were terminated because of eligibility for a social security benefit, may again receive his spouse retirement benefit from and after making application with the board of trustees to reinstate such spouse retirement 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 any political subdivision thereof or instrumentality thereof.

(z) "State service" shall mean all offices and positions of trust or employment in the employ of the state, or any political subdivision or instrumentality thereof, which elect to participate as provided by Section 25-11-105(f), including the position of elected or fee officials of the counties and their
deputies and employees performing public services or any
department, independent agency, board or commission thereof, and
shall also include all offices and positions of trust or
employment in the employ of joint state and federal agencies
administering state and federal funds and service rendered by
employees of the public schools. Effective July 1, 1973, all
nonprofessional public school employees, such as bus drivers,
janitors, maids, maintenance workers and cafeteria employees,
shall have the option to become members in accordance with Section
25-11-105(b), and shall be eligible to receive credit for services
prior to July 1, 1973, provided the contributions and interest are
paid by the employee in accordance with that section; provided,
further, that the county or municipal separate school district may
pay the employer contribution and pro rata share of interest of
the retroactive service from available funds. From and after July
1, 1998, retroactive service credit shall be purchased at the
actuarial cost in accordance with Section 25-11-105(b). Public
school bus drivers shall be eligible to become or remain members
of the retirement system regardless of the number of hours per
week or per month for which they receive compensation.
(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, shall
include the feminine pronoun.

SECTION 3. Section 25-11-105, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:

25-11-105. I. THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MEMBERSHIP
The membership of this retirement system shall be composed as
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
(i) those persons who are specifically excluded, (ii) those persons to whom election is provided in Articles 1 and 3, or (iii) those persons who continue to receive a retirement allowance during their employment as bus drivers under the authority of Section 25-11-126, shall become members of the retirement system as a condition of their employment.

(b) All persons who shall become employees in the state service after January 31, 1953, except those specifically excluded or as to whom election is provided in Articles 1 and 3, unless they shall file with the board prior to the lapse of sixty (60) days of employment or sixty (60) days after the effective date of the cited articles, whichever is later, on a form prescribed by the board, a notice of election not to be covered by the membership of the retirement system and a duly executed waiver of all present and prospective benefits which would otherwise inure to them on account of their participation in the system, shall become members of the retirement system; provided, however, that no credit for prior service will be granted to members until they have contributed to Article 3 of the retirement system for a minimum period of at least four (4) years. Such members shall receive credit for services performed prior to January 1, 1953, in employment now covered by Article 3, but no credit shall be granted for retroactive services between January 1, 1953, and the date of their entry into the retirement system unless the employee pays into the retirement system both the employer's and the employee's contributions on wages paid him during the period from January 31, 1953, to the date of his becoming a contributing member, together with interest at the rate determined by the board of trustees. Members reentering after withdrawal from service shall qualify for prior service under the provisions of Section 25-11-117. From and after July 1, 1998, upon eligibility as noted above, the member may receive credit for such retroactive service 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.

(d) All persons who are employees in the state service on January 31, 1953, and who are members of any nonfunded retirement system operated by the State of Mississippi, or any of its departments or agencies, shall become members of this system with prior service credit unless, before February 1, 1953, they shall file a written notice with the board of trustees that they do not elect to become members.

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

(f) Each political subdivision of the state and each
instrumentality of the state or a political subdivision, or both,
is hereby authorized to submit, for approval by the board of
trustees, a plan for extending the benefits of this article to
employees of any such political subdivision or instrumentality.
Each such plan or any amendment to the plan for extending benefits
thereof shall be approved by the board of trustees if it finds
that such plan, or such plan as amended, is in conformity with
such requirements as are provided in Articles 1 and 3; however,
upon approval of such plan or any such plan heretofore approved by
the board of trustees, the approved plan shall not be subject to
cancellation or termination by the political subdivision or
instrumentality, except that any community hospital serving a
municipality that joined the Public Employees' Retirement System
as of November 1, 1956, to offer social security coverage for its
employees and subsequently extended retirement annuity coverage to
its employees as of December 1, 1965, may, upon documentation of
extreme financial hardship, have future retirement annuity
coverage cancelled or terminated at the discretion of the board of
trustees. 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
exception of municipal employees who are already covered by
existing retirement plans; provided, however, those employees in
this class may elect to come under the provisions of this article;

(2) It specifies the source or sources from which
the funds necessary to make the payments required by paragraph (d)
of Section 25-11-123 and of paragraph (f)(5)B and C of this
section are expected to be derived and contains reasonable
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;

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

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

A. The board of trustees shall not finally
refuse to approve a plan submitted under paragraph (f), and shall
not terminate an approved plan without reasonable notice and
opportunity for hearing to each political subdivision or
instrumentality affected thereby. The board’s decision in any
such case shall be final, conclusive and binding unless an appeal
be taken by the political subdivision or instrumentality aggrieved
thereby to the Circuit Court of Hinds County, Mississippi, in
accordance with the provisions of law with respect to civil causes
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.

C. Every political subdivision or instrumentality required to make payments under paragraph (f)(5)B hereof is authorized, in consideration of the employees’ retention in or entry upon employment after enactment of Articles 1 and 3, to impose upon its employees, as to services which are covered by an approved plan, a contribution with respect to wages (as defined in Section 25-11-5) not exceeding the amount provided in Section 25-11-123(d) if such services constituted employment within the meaning of Articles 1 and 3, and to deduct the amount of such contribution from the wages as and when paid. Contributions so collected shall be paid into the contribution fund as partial discharge of the liability of such political subdivisions or instrumentalities under paragraph (f)(5)B hereof. Failure to deduct such contribution shall not relieve the employee or employer of liability thereof.

D. Any state agency, school, political subdivision, instrumentality or any employer that is required to submit contribution payments or wage reports under any section of this chapter shall be assessed interest on delinquent payments or wage reports as determined by the board of trustees in accordance with rules and regulations adopted by the board and such assessed interest may be recovered by action in a court of competent jurisdiction against such reporting agency liable therefor or may, upon due certification of delinquency and at the request of the board of trustees, be deducted from any other monies payable to 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 rata share of the total expense
of administering Articles 1 and 3 as provided by regulations of
said board.

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

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

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

In the event any member of any other actuarially funded
system maintained by an agency of the state changes his employment
to an agency covered by this system, the board of trustees may
authorize the receipt of the transfer of the member's creditable
service and of the present value of the member's accumulation account and of the present value of the member's
accumulated membership contributions from such other system,
provided the employee agrees to the transfer of his accumulated membership contributions to this system and provided the other system is authorized and agrees to make such transfer.

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

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

(1) The member shall furnish proof satisfactory to the board of trustees of certification of such services from the political subdivision or instrumentality where the services were rendered or verification by the Social Security Administration; 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 (k) shall be construed to limit the authority of the board to allow the correction of reporting errors or omissions based on the payment of employee and employer contributions plus applicable interest. Payment for such time shall be made in increments of not less than one-quarter (1/4) year of creditable service beginning with the most recent service. Upon the payment of all or part of such required contributions, plus interest or the actuarial cost as provided above, the member shall receive credit for the period of creditable service for which full payment has been made to the retirement system.

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

(m) All rights to purchase retroactive service credit or repay a refund as provided in Section 25-11-101 et seq. shall terminate upon retirement.

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:

(a) Patient or inmate help in state charitable, penal or correctional institutions;
(b) Students of any state educational institution employed by any agency of the state for temporary, part-time or intermittent work;
(c) Participants of Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA) being Public Law 93-203, who enroll on or after July 1, 1979.

III. TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

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

SECTION 4. Section 25-11-127, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-11-127. No person who is being paid a retirement allowance or a pension after retirement under this article shall be employed or paid for any service by the State of Mississippi, except as provided in this section or in Section 25-11-126. This section shall not apply to any pensioner who has been elected to public office after retirement, nor to any person employed because of special knowledge or experience. This section shall not be construed to mean that any person employed or elected under the above exceptions shall become a member under Article 3 of the retirement system, nor shall any retirant of this retirement system who is reemployed or is reelected to office after retirement continue to draw retirement benefits while so reemployed or reelected except those persons who continue to receive a retirement allowance during their employment as bus drivers under the authority of Section 25-11-126. Any person who
has been retired under the provisions of Articles 1 and 3 and who is later reemployed in service covered by this article shall cease to receive benefits under this article unless he continues to receive a retirement allowance during his employment as a bus driver under the authority of Section 25-11-126, and the person shall again become a contributing member of the retirement system; and when the person retires again, if he has been a contributing member of the retirement system during his reemployment and his reemployment exceeds six (6) months, he shall have his benefit recomputed, including service after again becoming a member, provided * * * that the total retirement allowance paid to the retired member in his previous retirement shall be deducted from his retirement reserve and taken into consideration in recalculating the retirement allowance under a new option selected. Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any county or city not a member of the Public Employees' Retirement System from employing persons up to the age of seventy-three (73); and in addition, through June 30, 1988, nothing contained in this section shall be construed as prohibiting any governmental unit that is a member from employing persons up to the age of seventy-three (73) who are not eligible for membership at the time of employment under Article 3. The board of trustees of the retirement system shall have the right to prescribe rules and regulations for the carrying out of this provision.

The provisions of this section shall not be construed to prohibit any retirant, regardless of age, from being employed and from drawing retirement allowance either (a) for a period of time not to exceed one hundred twenty (120) days in any fiscal year, but less than one-half (1/2) of the normal working days for the position in any fiscal year, or (b) for a period of time in any fiscal year sufficient in length to permit a retirant to earn not in excess of twenty-five percent (25%) of retirant's average
compensation or the current rate of the salary in effect for the regular position filled. Notice shall be given in writing to the executive director of the system, setting forth the facts upon which the employment is being made, and the notice shall be given within five (5) days from the date of employment and also from the date of termination of the employment.

* * * Any member who has attained seventy (70) years of age and who has forty (40) or more years of creditable service may continue in office or employment or be reemployed or elected, provided that the person files annually, in writing, in the office of the employer and the office of the executive director of the system before those services, a waiver of all salary or compensation and elects to receive in lieu of that salary or compensation a retirement allowance as provided in this section, in which event no salary or compensation shall thereafter be due or payable for those services. However, any such officer or employee may receive, in addition to the retirement allowance, any per diem, office expense allowance, mileage or travel expense authorized by any statute of the State of Mississippi.

* * * Any member may continue in municipal or county office or employment or be reemployed or elected in a municipality or county, provided that the person files annually, in writing, in the office of the employer and the office of the executive director of the system before those services, a waiver of all salary or compensation and elects to receive in lieu of that salary or compensation a retirement allowance as provided in this section, in which event no salary or compensation shall thereafter be due or payable for those services. However, any such officer or employee may receive, in addition to the retirement allowance, any per diem, office expense allowance, mileage or travel expense authorized by any statute of the State of Mississippi.

SECTION 5. Section 25-15-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:
25-15-3. For the purposes of this article, the words and phrases used herein shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Employee" means any person who works full time for the State of Mississippi and receives his compensation in a direct payment from a department, agency or institution of the state government and any person who works full time for any school district, community/junior college, public library or university-based program authorized under Section 37-23-31 for deaf, aphasic and emotionally disturbed children or any regular nonstudent bus driver. This term includes legislators, employees of the legislative branch and the judicial branch of the state, full-time salaried judges and full-time district attorneys and their staff and full-time compulsory school attendance officers. For the purposes of this article, any "employee" making contributions to the Public Employees' Retirement System or the Mississippi Highway Patrol Retirement System shall be considered a full-time employee; however, any person who is employed as a bus driver under the authority of Section 25-11-126 shall be considered a full-time employee even though the person is not a contributing member of the Public Employees' Retirement System.

(b) "Department" means the Department of Finance and Administration.

(c) "Plan" means the State and School Employees Life and Health Insurance Plan created under this article.

(d) "Fund" means the State and School Employees Insurance Fund set up under this article.

(e) "Retiree" or "retired employee" means any employee who is retired under the Public Employees' Retirement System or the Mississippi Highway Patrol Retirement System and is receiving a retirement allowance from either system.

(f) "Board" means the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board created under Section 25-15-303.
SECTION 6. Section 25-15-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-15-13. Each eligible employee may participate in the plan by signing up for the plan at the time of employment. Each eligible employee who declines coverage under the plan must sign a waiver of coverage. After acceptance in the plan, the employee may cease his or her participation by filing a specific disclaimer with the board. Forms for this purpose shall be prescribed and issued by the board. All eligible employees will be eligible to participate in the plan on the effective date of the plan or on the date on which they are employed by the state, whichever is later, provided they make the necessary contributions as provided in this article. Spouses of employees, unmarried dependent children from birth to age nineteen (19) years, unmarried dependent children who are full-time students up to age twenty-five (25) years, and physically or mentally handicapped children, regardless of age, are eligible under the plan as of the date the employee becomes eligible. If both spouses are eligible employees who participate in the plan, the benefits shall apply individually to each spouse by virtue of his or her participation in the plan. If those spouses also have one or more eligible dependents participating in the plan, the cost of their dependents shall be calculated at a special family plan rate. The cost for participation by the dependents shall be paid by the spouse who elects to carry such dependents under his or her coverage.

Any person who is employed as a bus driver under the authority of Section 25-11-126 shall be eligible to continue health insurance and life insurance coverage under the plan upon termination of employment as a bus driver, in the same manner and subject to the same limitations as any other retired employee.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.