HOUSE BILL NO. 671

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 41-61-61, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO DELETE FROM THE MISSISSIPPI MEDICAL EXAMINER ACT THE PROVISION THAT ALLOWS, FOR LIMITED PURPOSES UNDER THAT ACT, NURSES, EMERGENCY MEDICAL TECHNICIANS AND OTHER COMPETENT PERSONS TO EXPRESS AN OPINION THAT A DEATH HAS OCCURRED, IN THE ABSENCE OF A PHYSICIAN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 41-61-61, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

41-61-61. (1) Upon the death of any person where that death affects the public interest, the medical examiner of the county in which the body of the deceased is found or, if death occurs in a moving conveyance, where the conveyance stops and death is pronounced, shall be notified promptly by any person having knowledge or suspicion of such a death, as provided in subsection (1) of Section 41-61-59. No person shall disturb the body at the scene of such a death until authorized by the medical examiner, unless the medical examiner is unavailable and it is determined by an appropriate law enforcement officer that the presence of the body at the scene would risk the integrity of the body or provide a hazard to the safety of others. ♦ ♦ ♦

(2) The discovery of anatomical material suspected of being part of the human body shall be promptly reported to the medical examiner of the county in which the material is found, or to the State Medical Examiner.

(3) A person who willfully moves, distributes or conceals a body or body part in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be punished by a fine of not more than Five Hundred Dollars ($500.00), or by imprisonment for not more than
(4) Upon oral or written authorization of the medical
examiner, if an autopsy is to be performed, the body shall be
transported directly to an autopsy facility in a suitable secure
conveyance, and the expenses of transportation shall be paid by
the county for which the service is provided. The county may
contract with individuals or make available a vehicle to the
medical examiner or law enforcement personnel for transportation
of bodies.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
and after July 1, 2001.