MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE

REGULAR SESSION 2001

By: Senator(s) Simmons

To: Education; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2071

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-159-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,1
TO ESTABLISH THE "THREE-FOR-THREE TEACHER RELOCATION PROGRAM"; TO
AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO MAKE ANNUAL GRANTS TO
CERTIFICATED TEACHERS WHO RELOCATE IN ORDER TO TEACH IN A CRITICAL
TEACHER SHORTAGE GEOGRAPHIC SECTION OF THE STATE; TO PROVIDE
CERTAIN CONDITIONS ON RECEIPT OF THE GRANT AND PENALTIES FOR
BREACH OF CONTRACT; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO
PROMULGATE REGULATIONS NECESSARY FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THIS
ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-159-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
amended as follows:

37-159-5. (1) The State Board of Education shall prescribe
rules and regulations which, subject to available appropriations,
allow for reimbursement to the state licensed teachers, from both
in-state and out-of-state, who enter into a contract for
employment in a school district situated within a geographical
area of the state where there exists a critical shortage of
teachers, as designated by the State Board of Education, for the
expense of moving when the employment necessitates the relocation
of the teacher to a different geographical area than that in which
the teacher resides before entering into such contract. In order
to be eligible for the reimbursement, the teacher must apply to
the local district and the district must obtain the prior approval
from the department for reimbursement before the relocation
occurs. If the reimbursement is approved, the department shall
provide funds to the school district to reimburse the teacher an
amount not to exceed One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) for the
documented actual expenses incurred in the course of relocating,
including the expense of any professional moving company or
persons employed to assist with the move, rented moving vehicles
or equipment, mileage in the amount authorized for state employees
under Section 25-3-41 if the teacher used his personal vehicle or
vehicles for the move, meals and such other expenses associated
with the relocation in accordance with the department's
established rules and regulations. No teacher may be reimbursed
for moving expenses under this section on more than one (1)
occasion.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to require the
actual residence to which the teacher relocates to be within the
boundaries of the school district which has executed a contract
for employment with the teacher or within the boundaries of the
area designated by the State Board of Education as the critical
teacher shortage area in order for the teacher to be eligible for
reimbursement for his moving expenses. However, teachers must
relocate within the boundaries of the State of Mississippi.

(2) There is hereby established the "Three-for-Three Teacher
Relocation Program." To the extent of appropriations available,
certificated teachers who have expressed in writing a present
intention to teach in a critical teacher shortage geographic
section of the state, as designated on an annual basis by the
State Board of Education, shall be eligible for an annual
relocation grant of Three Thousand Dollars ($3,000.00) for each of
three (3) years, in addition to the reimbursement of relocation
expenses authorized under subsection (1). To be eligible to
receive the annual grant, recipients shall be required to teach in
a school located in such critical teacher shortage geographic area
for at least seventy-eight (78) school days during each of the two
(2) school semesters immediately after the receipt of the grant.
No recipient shall receive more than Nine Thousand Dollars
($9,000.00) in the aggregate from this program.

Persons failing to meet teaching requirements in any required
semester shall immediately be in breach of contract and become
liable to the State Board of Education for the amount of the annual grant received for the current year, with interest accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the breach occurs, except in the case of a deferral of debt for cause by the board, after which period of deferral, teaching duties required hereunder will be resumed. If the claim for repayment of such grant is placed in the hands of an attorney for collection after default, then the obligor shall be liable for an additional amount equal to a reasonable attorney's fee.

Failure to repay any grant and interest that becomes due shall be cause for the revocation of a person's teaching certificate by the State Department of Education.

All monies repaid to the State Board of Education hereunder shall be added to the appropriations made for purposes of this section, and said appropriations shall not lapse.

The State Board of Education shall promulgate regulations necessary for the proper administration of this section.

If insufficient funds are available for requested grants to qualified applicants during any fiscal year, priority consideration shall be given to persons receiving previous grants and participating in the program.

The State Board of Education shall make an annual report to the Legislature enumerating the relocation grants awarded, the names of persons to whom granted, and the teaching location of applicants.

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