AN ACT TO CREATE SECTION 73-39-43, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE TO CERTIFY ANIMAL CONTROL AGENCIES TO UTILIZE CERTAIN CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES FOR THE HUMANE DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS AND TO CERTIFY AND PRESCRIBE QUALIFICATIONS FOR CERTIFIED ANIMAL EUTHANASIA TECHNICIANS (CAET) TO PERFORM EUTHANASIA OF ANIMALS; TO AMEND SECTION 73-39-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI BOARD OF VETERINARY MEDICINE TO ADOPT RULES IN CONFORMITY THERETO; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. The following provision shall be codified as Section 73-39-43, Mississippi Code of 1972:

73-39-43. (1) For purposes of this section, the following terms shall have the meaning ascribed herein, unless the context shall indicate otherwise:

(a) "Certified animal control agency" means a federal, county or municipal animal shelter, dog pound, or animal control agency, private humane society, state, county or municipal law enforcement agency, or any combination thereof, which temporarily houses stray, unwanted or injured animals and which is certified pursuant to the provisions of this section.

(b) "Certified animal euthanasia technician (CAET)" means a person employed by a certified animal control agency who is authorized by the Mississippi Board of Veterinary Medicine to perform euthanasia on animals with approved scheduled substances.

(c) "Board" means the Mississippi Board of Veterinary Medicine.

(2) (a) The Mississippi Board of Veterinary Medicine shall adopt rules providing for the issuance of permits for the
purchase, possession and use of sodium pentobarbital or other
board-approved drugs for euthanasia by certified animal control
agencies. The rules shall set forth guidelines for the proper
storage and handling of the substances and other provisions as may
be necessary to ensure that these drugs are used solely for the
purpose set forth in this section. The rules shall also provide
for an application or inspection fee and a renewal fee at set
intervals.

(b) Upon certification by the board that the applicant
meets the qualifications set forth in the rules, a permit shall be
issued.

(c) The board may revoke or suspend the permit upon the
determination that the permittee fails to follow the rules of the
board regarding proper storage and handling or use of the approved
euthanasia substances.

(3) (a) Euthanasia of animals in a certified animal control
agency may only be performed by a licensed veterinarian, including
a licensed veterinary technician employed by and functioning under
the direct supervision of a licensed veterinarian, or a certified
animal euthanasia technician as provided by law. A certified
animal control agency which employs a certified animal euthanasia
technician may purchase, possess and administer sodium
pentobarbital or such other drug which the board may approve for
the euthanasia of animals. Sodium pentobarbital and such other
drugs approved by the board shall be the only drugs used for the
euthanasia of animals in a certified animal control agency. Upon
submission of a complete application, payment of a fee established
by the board and successful completion of a board-approved animal
euthanasia specialist training course by the applicant, the Board
of Veterinary Examiners shall issue to any person whom it
determines to be qualified a certificate for the person to
function as a certified animal euthanasia specialist.
(b) No officer or agent of a certified animal control agency or veterinarian acting in good faith and with due care pursuant to this act may be held liable either criminally or civilly for that act, nor shall any civil or criminal liability attach to the employer of the officer, agent or veterinarian.

(c) A court order shall not be necessary to carry out this section.

(4) Any person who violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and, upon conviction, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding Five Hundred Dollars ($500.00), or imprisonment in the county jail, for a term not exceeding six (6) months, or both.

SECTION 2. Section 73-39-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

73-39-9. The board shall elect from their members a president, vice president and secretary-treasurer. The board is authorized:

(a) To adopt reasonable rules governing the practice of veterinary medicine as are necessary to enable it to carry out and make effective the purpose and intent of this chapter. Such rules shall be adopted and promulgated in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(b) To adopt rules of professional conduct appropriate to establish and maintain a high standard of integrity, skills and practice in the profession of veterinary medicine. In prescribing such rules of professional conduct, the board may be guided by the principles of veterinary medical ethics adopted by the American Veterinary Medical Association and the Mississippi Veterinary Medical Association.

(c) To have its rules printed which shall be distributed to all licensed veterinarians.

(d) To bring proceedings in courts for the enforcement of this chapter or any rules made pursuant thereto.
(e) To hold at least one (1) regular meeting on the third Tuesday in June each year in the City of Jackson at such time and location as fixed by the board, for the purpose of conducting examinations of applicants for license to practice veterinary medicine, the election of officers and to consider any other business that may properly come before the board. Other meetings may be held upon the call of the president and secretary of the board.

(f) To pass upon the qualifications of applicants for a license to practice veterinary medicine in this state, or for a certificate as an animal technician.

(g) To prescribe the subjects, character, manner, time and place of holding examinations and the filing of applications for examinations and to conduct the examinations.

(h) To issue temporary permits to practice to duly qualified applicants which shall be signed by the secretary.

(i) To provide for, regulate and require all persons licensed in accordance with the provisions of this chapter to renew their license annually; to require as a condition precedent to such annual renewal the payment of the annual renewal fee as provided herein; to issue annual renewal licenses to such persons and to suspend or revoke the license of such persons who fail, refuse or neglect to renew same or pay such fees.

(j) To conduct investigations and hearings upon complaints calling for discipline of a licensee or applicant for license.

(k) To take testimony on any matter under its jurisdiction and any member thereof may administer oaths.

(l) To issue summons and subpoenas, including subpoenas duces tecum, for any witness in connection with any matter within the jurisdiction of the board, which shall be signed by either the president or the secretary-treasurer of the board.

(m) To adopt such forms as it may deem necessary.
To adopt rules and regulate the certification of animal control agencies and animal euthanasia technicians pursuant to Section 73-39-43, Mississippi Code of 1972.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.