AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 97-37-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO CLARIFY RECIPROCITY ALLOWING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO CARRY WEAPONS IN OTHER STATES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 97-37-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

97-37-7. (1) It shall not be a violation of Section 97-37-1 or any other statute for pistols, firearms or other suitable and appropriate weapons to be carried by duly constituted bank guards, company guards, watchmen, railroad special agents or duly authorized representatives, agents or employees of a patrol service, guard service, or a company engaged in the business of transporting money, securities or other valuables, while actually engaged in the performance of their duties as such, provided that such persons are under bond in a sum of not less than One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) for the lawful and faithful performance of their duties, the cost of which bond shall be paid by the employer of such persons; and further provided that such persons have first made written application and obtained an annual permit so to do from the sheriff of the county in which they are employed.

Provided, however, that where the duties of any person covered by the provisions of this paragraph may carry him into more than one county, such person may file a bond in the sum of Two Thousand Dollars ($2,000.00) with the Commissioner of Public Safety, for the lawful and faithful performance of his duties, the cost of the bond shall be paid by the employer of such person, and provided further that such person has first made written application with
and obtained a permit so to do from the Commissioner of Public Safety, and said permit shall be valid as a statewide permit. No such permit shall be issued to any person who has ever been convicted of a felony under the laws of this or any other state or of the United States.

(2) It shall further not be a violation of this or any other statute for pistols, firearms or other suitable and appropriate weapons to be carried by Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks law enforcement officers, investigators employed by the Attorney General, district attorneys, legal assistants to district attorneys, criminal investigators employed by the district attorneys, investigators or probation officers employed by the Department of Corrections, employees of the State Auditor who are authorized by the State Auditor to perform investigative functions, or any deputy fire marshal or investigator employed by the State Fire Marshal, while engaged in the performance of their duties as such, or by fraud investigators with the Department of Human Services, or by judges of the Mississippi Supreme Court, Court of Appeals, circuit, chancery, county and municipal courts.

Before any person shall be authorized under this subsection to carry a weapon, he shall complete a weapons training course approved by the Board of Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training. Before any criminal investigator employed by a district attorney shall be authorized under this section to carry a pistol, firearm or other weapon, he shall have complied with Section 45-6-11 or any training program required for employment as an agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. A law enforcement officer, as defined in Section 45-6-3, shall be authorized to carry weapons in courthouses in performance of his official duties. This section shall in no way interfere with the right of a trial judge to restrict the carrying of firearms in the courtroom.
(3) It shall not be a violation of this or any other statute for pistols, firearms or other suitable and appropriate weapons, to be carried by any out-of-state, full-time commissioned law enforcement officer who holds a valid commission card from the appropriate out-of-state law enforcement agency and a photo identification. The provisions of this subsection shall only apply if the state where the out-of-state officer is employed has entered into a reciprocity agreement with the state that allows full-time commissioned law enforcement officers, as defined in Section 45-6-3, in Mississippi to lawfully carry or possess a weapon in such other states. The Commissioner of Public Safety is authorized to enter into reciprocal agreements with other states to carry out the provisions of this subsection.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.