HOUSE BILL NO. 844
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 97-37-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE GUARDS AND OTHER PERSONS AUTHORIZED TO CARRY CONCEALED WEAPONS TO OBTAIN A PERMIT; TO PROVIDE FOR PERMIT FEES; TO REQUIRE FINGERPRINTING; 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) (a) 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 who are not sworn law enforcement officers, 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 have made a written application and paid a nonrefundable permit fee of One Hundred Dollars ($100.00) to the Department of Public Safety.

(b) No 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. To determine an applicant's eligibility for a permit, the person shall be fingerprinted. If no disqualifying record is identified at the state level, the fingerprints shall be forwarded by the Department of Public Safety to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a national criminal history record check. The department shall charge a fee which includes the amounts required by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.
Investigation and the department for the national and state
criminal history record checks and any necessary costs incurred by
the department for the handling and administration of the criminal
history background checks. In the event a legible set of
fingerprints, as determined by the Department of Public Safety and
the Federal Bureau of Investigation, cannot be obtained after a
minimum of three (3) attempts, the Department of Public Safety
shall determine eligibility based upon a name check by the
Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol and a Federal Bureau of
Investigation name check conducted by the Mississippi Safety
Patrol at the request of the Department of Public Safety.

(c) A person may obtain a duplicate of a lost or
destroyed permit upon payment of a Fifteen Dollar ($15.00)
replacement fee to the Department of Public Safety, if he
furnishes a notarized statement to the department that the permit
has been lost or destroyed.

(d) (i) No less than ninety (90) days prior to the
expiration date of a permit, the Department of Public Safety shall
mail to the permit holder written notice of expiration together
with the renewal form prescribed by the department. The permit
holder shall renew the permit on or before the expiration date by
filing with the department the renewal form, a notarized affidavit
stating that the permit holder remains qualified, and the renewal
fee of Fifty Dollars ($50.00); provided, however, that honorably
retired law enforcement officers shall be exempt from payment of
the renewal fee. A permit holder who fails to file a renewal
application on or before its expiration date shall pay a late fee
of Fifteen Dollars ($15.00).

(ii) Renewal of the permit shall be required every
four (4) years. The permit of a qualified renewal applicant shall
be renewed upon receipt of the completed renewal application and
appropriate payment of fees.
(iii) A permit cannot be renewed six (6) months or more after its expiration date, and such permit shall be deemed to be permanently expired; the holder may reapply for an original permit as provided in this section.

(2) 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 Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks law enforcement officers, railroad special agents who are sworn 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 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.