HOUSE BILL NO. 867

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 25-15-3 AND 25-15-13, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN RETIRED PUBLIC SCHOOL AND STATE EMPLOYEES MAY ENROLL IN THE STATE AND SCHOOL EMPLOYEES LIFE AND HEALTH INSURANCE PLAN DURING A ONE-YEAR OPEN ENROLLMENT PERIOD; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 25-15-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-15-3. For the purposes of this article, the words and phrases used herein shall have the following meanings:

(a) "Employee" means a person who works full time for the State of Mississippi and receives his compensation in a direct payment from a department, agency or institution of the State Government and any person who works full time for any school district, community/junior college, public library or university-based program authorized under Section 37-23-31 for deaf, aphasic and emotionally disturbed children or any regular nonstudent bus driver. This shall include legislators, employees of the legislative branch and the judicial branch of the state and "employees" shall include full-time salaried judges and full-time district attorneys and their staff and full-time compulsory school attendance officers. For the purposes of this article, any "employee" making contributions to the State of Mississippi retirement plan shall be considered a full-time employee.

(b) "Department" means the Department of Finance and Administration.

(c) "Plan" means the State and School Employees Life and Health Insurance Plan created under this article.
(d) "Fund" means the State and School Employees Insurance Fund set up under this article.

(e) "Retiree" means any employee retired under the Mississippi retirement plan, including those retired employees who enroll in the plan during the open enrollment period provided in Section 25-15-13.

(f) "Board" means the State and School Employees Health Insurance Management Board created under Section 25-15-303.

SECTION 2. Section 25-15-13, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

25-15-13. Each eligible employee may participate in the plan by signing up for the plan at the time of employment. Each eligible employee who declines coverage under the plan must sign a waiver of coverage. After acceptance in the plan, the employee may cease his or her participation by filing a specific disclaimer with the board. Forms for this purpose shall be prescribed and issued by the board. All eligible employees will be eligible to participate in the plan on the effective date of the plan or on the date on which they are employed by the state, whichever is later, provided they make the necessary contributions as provided in this article. Spouses of employees, unmarried dependent children from birth to age nineteen (19) years, unmarried dependent children who are full-time students up to age twenty-five (25) years, and physically or mentally handicapped children, regardless of age, are eligible under the plan as of the date the employee becomes eligible. If both spouses are eligible employees who participate in the plan, the benefits shall apply individually to each spouse by virtue of his or her participation in the plan. If those spouses also have one or more eligible dependents participating in the plan, the cost of their dependents shall be calculated at a special family plan rate. The cost for participation by the dependents shall be paid by the spouse who elects to carry such dependents under his or her coverage.
board shall provide for an open enrollment period beginning July 1, 2002, and ending July 1, 2003, for those employees who retired before April 12, 1991.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2002.