HOUSE BILL NO. 729

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-3-83, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PLACE VIDEO SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS IN EVERY CLASSROOM AND ON EVERY SCHOOL BUS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. Section 37-3-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-3-83. (1) There is established within the State Department of Education a School Safety Grant Program, available to all eligible public school districts, to assist in financing programs to provide school safety.

(2) The school board of each school district, with the assistance of the State Department of Education School Safety Center, shall adopt a comprehensive local school district school safety plan and shall update the plan on an annual basis.

(3) Subject to the extent of appropriations available, the School Safety Grant Program shall offer any of the following specific preventive services, and other additional services appropriate to the most current school district school safety plan:

(a) Metal detectors;

(b) Video surveillance cameras, communications equipment and monitoring equipment for classrooms, school buildings, school grounds and school buses, as required under subsection (5) of this section;

(c) Crisis management/action teams for the purpose of responding to school violence;
(d) Violence prevention training, conflict resolution training, and other appropriate training designated by the State Department of Education for faculty and staff; and

(e) School safety personnel.

(4) Each local school district in this state may annually apply for school safety grant funds, subject to appropriations by the Legislature. School safety grants shall include a base grant amount plus an additional amount per student in average daily attendance in the school or school district. The base grant amount and amount per student shall be determined by the State Board of Education, subject to specific appropriation therefor by the Legislature. In order to be eligible for such program, each local school board desiring to participate shall apply to the State Department of Education by May 31 before the beginning of the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by the department, and shall be required to establish a local School Safety Task Force to involve members of the community in the school safety effort. The State Department of Education shall determine by July 1 of each succeeding year which local school districts have submitted approved applications for school safety grants.

(5) Before July 1, 2004, each local school district shall install video surveillance camera equipment in every classroom and on every school bus for the purpose of monitoring school disciplinary problems. A school district may use school safety grant funds or any other available funds for the purchase of video surveillance camera equipment and monitoring equipment.

(6) The State Department of Education shall research the effectiveness of using video surveillance camera equipment in the classroom and on school buses. The department shall address the following issues:

(a) The effectiveness of video cameras in the classroom and on school buses in reducing student disciplinary problems;
(b) The effectiveness of teachers and bus drivers using the cameras to present clear and convincing evidence of a student's disruptive behavior to the student, the principal, the superintendent and the student's parents; and

(c) The effectiveness of teachers using the cameras to review teaching performance and receive diagnostic feedback for developmental purposes.

(7) The State Department of Education shall report annually to the Chairmen of the Education Committees in the House of Representatives and Senate on the operation of the School Safety Center and the School Safety Grant Program, along with any recommendations for expansion or revision of the program.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2003.