HOUSE BILL NO. 1228

AN ACT TO PROVIDE AN ALLOTMENT OF FUNDS UNDER THE ADEQUATE EDUCATION PROGRAM TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVING THE HIGHEST INCIDENCES OF CRIME AND VIOLENCE FOR THE PURPOSE OF EMPLOYING SOCIAL WORKERS; TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DETERMINE WHICH SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL RECEIVE THOSE ALLOTMENTS; TO REQUIRE SOCIAL WORKERS EMPLOYED WITH THOSE FUNDS TO BE APPROPRIATELY LICENSED; TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO PROMULGATE RULES AND REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF THOSE SOCIAL WORKERS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, the State Department of Education shall allot sufficient funding under the adequate education program to those school districts designated under subsection (2) of this section for the purpose of employing a social worker.

(2) The State Department of Education shall designate school districts to receive an allotment for the purpose of employing a social worker. The districts shall be selected by the department according to greatest need, as indicated by records of the State Department of Education and the Division of Youth Services of the Department of Human Services that reflect those school districts having the highest incidences of crime, violence, food stamp participation and unemployment.

(3) The State Department of Education may increase the number of social worker positions funded each year beyond the above requirements as money is made available.

(4) Any individual employed by a school district with funds allotted under this section must be appropriately licensed as a social worker under Section 73-53-1 et seq. The State Department of Education shall specify which license a social worker must hold...
as a qualification for being employed in a position funded under this section.

(5) To qualify for adequate education program funding, school social workers must be full-time professional personnel and must spend at least seventy-five percent (75%) of their work time in a direct relationship with students. School social workers may not devote more than twenty-five percent (25%) of the work day to administrative activities related to their social work.

(6) The State Department of Education may adopt rules and regulations regarding the activities of the school social workers. School social workers may perform those services that are not inconsistent with such rules and regulations.

(7) Nothing in this section shall prohibit a school district from employing social workers with local funds.

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