

By: Representative Scott (80th)

To: Juvenile Justice;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1241

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE POSITION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER
2 UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AS A FIVE-YEAR PILOT
3 PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE PROGRAM TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOL
4 DISTRICTS CHARACTERIZED BY POOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE, HIGH CRIME
5 RATES OR DELINQUENT ACTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
6 SERVICES SHALL ESTABLISH THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SALARY FOR
7 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS; TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS TO
8 USE SCHOOL FACILITIES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES; TO
9 PROVIDE THAT EACH SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER SHALL IMPLEMENT A
10 MENTORING PROGRAM IN ORDER TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH POSITIVE ROLE
11 MODELS FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY; TO REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL RESOURCE
12 OFFICER TO ESTABLISH A YOUTH CRIME WATCH PROGRAM TO HELP YOUTH IN
13 THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE, DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND GANG ACTIVITY
14 AND SMOKING CESSATION; TO DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS
15 OF THE YOUTH CRIME WATCH PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR THE
16 IMPLEMENTATION BY THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER OF A CONFLICT
17 RESOLUTION PROGRAM TO TEACH CHILDREN TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE
18 CONFLICTS AND TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH ANGER; TO PROVIDE FOR THE
19 IMPLEMENTATION OF A MENTORING GROUP FOR STUDENTS BETWEEN THE AGES
20 OF TEN AND FOURTEEN WITH ACADEMIC OR BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS; TO
21 REQUIRE STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL AND
22 COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND A PERFORMANCE GROUP; TO REQUIRE THE
23 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
24 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2008, AND TO RECOMMEND
25 TO THE LEGISLATURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSITION IN ALL
26 SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR ITS DISCONTINUATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

28 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created as a pilot program within
29 the Department of Human Services the position of school resource
30 officer. The school resource officer shall be responsible for the
31 administration of various interdiction programs and the
32 coordination of local collaborative efforts for at-risk children
33 in the school district to which the school resource officer is
34 assigned by the department.

35 (2) The Department of Human Services shall implement the
36 position of school resource officer as a pilot program in selected
37 school districts in the state. Every school district that has
38 been placed on probation for failure to meet accreditation
39 standards since July 1, 1999, must be included in the program.



40 The department shall designate the remainder of the districts for
41 participation in the pilot program by identifying those districts
42 most characterized by poor student performance, high incidents of
43 crime or delinquent acts. The pilot program shall exist until
44 July 1, 2008, at which time, based upon the recommendations of the
45 department, the position must be permanently established in all
46 school districts or discontinued.

47 (3) The Department of Human Services shall establish the
48 minimum qualifications and annual salary for the position of
49 school resource officer. The school resource officer shall
50 maintain an office in the school district to which the officer is
51 assigned by the department. The department may authorize the
52 employment of any clerical or support personnel that may be
53 necessary for the administration of the office of the school
54 resource officer.

55 (4) The school resource officer may use school buildings and
56 grounds within the school district for the holding of meetings and
57 gatherings of people in the performance of his duties.

58 **SECTION 2.** In order to provide students with an opportunity
59 to have direct personal contact with positive role models from
60 within the local community, the school resource officer shall
61 develop and implement a mentoring program that demonstrates the
62 accomplishments of local citizens. The mentoring program shall
63 coordinate the activities of school personnel, members of the
64 business community, civic leaders, law enforcement, churches and
65 other organizations to present various programs to student groups
66 and tutorial and guidance services to individual students.

67 **SECTION 3.** (1) Each school resource officer shall be
68 responsible for establishing a Youth Crime Watch Program in the
69 school district to which the officer is assigned to help youth in
70 the prevention of crime and violence, alcohol and drug use and
71 gang activity and smoking cessation. The Youth Crime Watch
72 Program must be a school-based, peer group organization comprised



73 and under the leadership of students. Through the program,
74 students shall promote student responsibility for a safe school
75 environment through formal and informal peer groups. In addition,
76 the program shall focus on the consequences of youth crime and
77 what students can do to prevent it. The school resource officer
78 shall provide guidance to the students in the formation of the
79 program and must be available, upon the request of the students,
80 to assist with the various activities conducted through the
81 program.

82 (2) In the Youth Crime Watch Program, a core group
83 consisting of an advisor, Youth Crime Watch representative,
84 students selected by the principal or staff and other program
85 participants must be formed at each school. The core group
86 members shall serve as representatives of the program to all
87 students, who must be encouraged to participate in the program.
88 Activities and responsibilities of the group must include defining
89 the school's needs and problems, promoting school spirit,
90 developing action plans and helping sponsor activities for
91 reducing campus crime, publicizing program successes and
92 increasing student involvement. The school resource officer shall
93 encourage the involvement of local businesses and law enforcement
94 officials to secure materials and guest speakers to further the
95 work of the Youth Crime Watch Program.

96 **SECTION 4.** The school resource officer shall develop and
97 implement in all schools in the district a formal conflict
98 resolution program designed to teach children to peacefully
99 resolve conflicts and to effectively deal with their anger. As
100 part of the program, students must be taught how to resolve
101 disagreements nonviolently by working together to arrive at
102 mutually acceptable solutions. Students, teachers or parent
103 volunteers also may be trained to settle disputes among students.
104 In addition to offering conflict resolution skills, the program
105 shall seek to develop leadership and coping skills in students.



106 The program must be a part of the curriculum of students at each
107 grade level.

108 **SECTION 5.** (1) The school resource officer shall establish
109 in each middle or junior high school in the district a school
110 mentoring group for students between the ages of ten (10) and
111 fourteen (14) with academic or behavioral problems. Through this
112 program, participants must have the opportunity to do homework for
113 several hours after school and to take part in group sessions
114 where the students have a safe outlet to discuss with their peers,
115 problems involving various aspects of their lives, including the
116 school or community, drug and alcohol use, child abuse, coping
117 with parental and other adult authorities, finances, gang
118 activity, emotional crises, peer pressure and health and legal
119 issues. Students must be trained to develop solutions to their
120 problems, including weighing what the consequences of different
121 actions in response to a particular problem might be.

122 (2) The mentoring program shall require students to
123 participate in school and community service projects. Through
124 these projects, students shall perform beneficial services for
125 their school or community through activities such as preparing
126 props for a school play or doing chores for the elderly. The
127 goals of the school and community service projects are to:

128 (a) Promote self-esteem, citizenship and other positive
129 qualities in participants;

130 (b) Enhance students' sense of empowerment as they make
131 a contribution to the community;

132 (c) Help students develop problem-solving, social and
133 employment skills;

134 (d) Foster interaction among students; and

135 (e) Provide students with opportunities to give help
136 and to receive help from their peers.

137 (3) Participants in the mentoring program also must be
138 required to participate in a performance group. The performance



139 groups shall encourage students to recognize and develop their
140 talents and to enhance skills in self-discipline.

141 **SECTION 6.** Before January 1, 2008, the Department of Human
142 Services shall evaluate those school districts that have
143 participated in the pilot program to determine the effectiveness
144 of the school resource officer. The evaluation must consider the
145 following factors:

146 (a) The improvement in academic performance of students
147 in the district;

148 (b) The degree to which youth crime and school violence
149 has decreased;

150 (c) The participation rate of students in the various
151 programs implemented and administered by the school resource
152 officer; and

153 (d) The opinions of school administrators, teachers,
154 parents and students in regard to the various programs implemented
155 and administered by the school resource officer.

156 The Department of Human Services shall prepare a report based
157 upon its evaluation of the pilot program. The report must contain
158 a recommendation by the department to the Legislature that the
159 program be permanently implemented in all school districts or
160 discontinued.

161 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
162 and after July 1, 2003.

