

By: Senator(s) Tollison, Doxey

To: Municipalities;  
Judiciary, Division B

SENATE BILL NO. 2475

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE MUNICIPALITIES TO ENACT BY ORDINANCE A  
2 PRE-DISCIPLINARY HEARING PRIOR TO THE SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF  
3 ANY LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER; ESTABLISH A MINIMUM LEVEL OF WRITTEN  
4 DUE PROCESS PROCEDURES; TO SPECIFY WHAT NOTICE SHALL BE PROVIDED  
5 TO THE OFFICER; TO PROVIDE THAT THE OFFICER MAY ATTEND THE  
6 HEARING, MAY BE REPRESENTED BY COUNSEL, MAY PRESENT EVIDENCE ON  
7 HIS OWN BEHALF, QUESTION WITNESSES AGAINST HIM, AND MAY REQUEST  
8 THAT THE EVIDENTIARY PHASE OF THE HEARING BE HELD IN EXECUTIVE  
9 SESSION; TO PROVIDE THAT FINAL ADJUDICATION SHALL BE HELD IN OPEN  
10 MEETING; TO PROVIDE THAT A MUNICIPALITY MAY ENACT PROCEDURES THAT  
11 PROVIDE GREATER PROTECTIONS TO LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS THAN THE  
12 MINIMUM REQUIRED BY THE ACT; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

14 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and cited as the "Law  
15 Enforcement Employment Procedures Act of 2004."

16 It is the intent of the Legislature to provide a fair and  
17 impartial hearing to law enforcement officers employed by  
18 municipalities prior to the disciplinary suspension or termination  
19 of those officers.

20 **SECTION 2.** (1) A municipality shall provide by ordinance a  
21 pre-disciplinary hearing prior to the suspension or termination of  
22 a law enforcement officer employed by the municipality.

23 (2) Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit a  
24 municipality from placing a law enforcement officer on leave with  
25 pay until the entity charged with the responsibility of conducting  
26 the hearing has rendered a decision in the matter.

27 **SECTION 3.** A municipality shall establish written due  
28 process procedures applicable to the pre-disciplinary hearing. At  
29 a minimum, this due process shall consists of:

30 (a) Written notice to the officer of the reason or  
31 reasons for the termination or suspension. This notice shall be  
32 issued by the person or persons with authority to suspend or

33 terminate the law enforcement officer. The notice shall also  
34 inform the officer that the officer, within ten (10) days, may  
35 request a hearing in writing and where such written request should  
36 be filed. If the officer fails to request a hearing within ten  
37 (10) days after receiving written notice of the suspension or  
38 termination, the right to such hearing shall be deemed waived.

39 (b) The accused officer shall have the right to appear  
40 at the hearing and to be represented at the officer's own expense.  
41 The officer or representative shall have the right to address any  
42 charges against the officer. If the officer has a representative,  
43 the officer may also be present at the hearing.

44 (c) The officer or the officer's representative shall  
45 have the right to present evidence and question witnesses who  
46 testify in the proceeding.

47 **SECTION 4.** A municipality may also hold a separate  
48 post-disciplinary hearing on the suspension or termination of the  
49 law enforcement officer. If the municipality holds a separate  
50 post-disciplinary hearing, the officer or officer's representative  
51 may present evidence and question witnesses.

52 **SECTION 5.** The hearing shall be conducted by an impartial  
53 hearing officer or body. If the hearing is before the municipal  
54 governing body, the hearing may be conducted in an executive  
55 session at the officer's election, provided that final  
56 adjudication shall occur in an open session.

57 **SECTION 6.** Nothing contained in this act shall prohibit a  
58 municipality from enacting an ordinance which exceeds the  
59 requirements of this act.

60 **SECTION 7.** The rules of evidence and rules of discovery  
61 shall not apply to hearings held pursuant to this act.

62 **SECTION 8.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
63 and after July 1, 2004.