

House Amendments to Senate Bill No. 2297

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE SENATE:

THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT THE HOUSE HAS ADOPTED THE AMENDMENTS SET OUT BELOW:

AMENDMENT NO. 1

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-7-307, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
10 amended as follows:

11 37-7-307. (1) For purposes of this section, the term
12 "licensed employee" means any employee of a public school district
13 required to hold a valid license by the Commission on Teacher and
14 Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and
15 Development.

16 (2) The school board of a school district shall establish by
17 rules and regulations a policy of sick leave with pay for licensed
18 employees and teacher assistants employed in the school district,
19 and such policy shall include the following minimum provisions for
20 sick and emergency leave with pay:

21 (a) Each licensed employee and teacher assistant, at
22 the beginning of each school year, shall be credited with a
23 minimum sick leave allowance, with pay, of seven (7) days for
24 absences caused by illness or physical disability of the employee
25 during that school year.

26 (b) Any unused portion of the total sick leave
27 allowance shall be carried over to the next school year and
28 credited to such licensed employee and teacher assistant if the
29 licensed employee or teacher assistant remains employed in the
30 same school district. In the event any public school licensed
31 employee or teacher assistant transfers from one public school
32 district in Mississippi to another, any unused portion of the
33 total sick leave allowance credited to such licensed employee or
34 teacher assistant shall be credited to such licensed employee or

35 teacher assistant in the computation of unused leave for
36 retirement purposes under Section 25-11-109. Accumulation of sick
37 leave allowed under this section shall be unlimited.

38 (c) No deduction from the pay of such licensed employee
39 or teacher assistant may be made because of absence of such
40 licensed employee or teacher assistant caused by illness or
41 physical disability of the licensed employee or teacher assistant
42 until after all sick leave allowance credited to such licensed
43 employee or teacher assistant has been used.

44 (d) For the first ten (10) days of absence of a
45 licensed employee because of illness or physical disability, in
46 any school year, in excess of the sick leave allowance credited to
47 such licensed employee, there may be deducted from the pay of such
48 licensed employee the established substitute amount of licensed
49 employee compensation paid in that local school district,
50 necessitated because of the absence of the licensed employee as a
51 result of illness or physical disability. Thereafter, the regular
52 pay of such absent licensed employee may be suspended and withheld
53 in its entirety for any period of absence because of illness or
54 physical disability during that school year.

55 (3) Beginning with the school year 1983-1984, each licensed
56 employee at the beginning of each school year shall be credited
57 with a minimum personal leave allowance, with pay, of two (2) days
58 for absences caused by personal reasons during that school year.
59 Such personal leave shall not be taken on the first day of the
60 school term, the last day of the school term, on a day previous to
61 a holiday or a day after a holiday. Personal leave may be used
62 for professional purposes, including absences caused by attendance
63 of such licensed employee at a seminar, class, training program,
64 professional association or other functions designed for
65 educators. No deduction from the pay of such licensed employee
66 may be made because of absence of such licensed employee caused by
67 personal reasons until after all personal leave allowance credited
68 to such licensed employee has been used. However, the
69 superintendent of a school district, in his discretion, may allow

70 a licensed employee personal leave in addition to any minimum
71 personal leave allowance, under the condition that there shall be
72 deducted from the salary of such licensed employee the actual
73 amount of any compensation paid to any person as a substitute,
74 necessitated because of the absence of the licensed employee. Any
75 unused portion of the total personal leave allowance up to five
76 (5) days shall be carried over to the next school year and
77 credited to such licensed employee if the licensed employee
78 remains employed in the same school district.

79 (4) Beginning with the school year 1992-1993, each licensed
80 employee shall be credited with a professional leave allowance,
81 with pay, for each day of absence caused by reason of such
82 employee's statutorily required membership and attendance at a
83 regular or special meeting held within the State of Mississippi of
84 the State Board of Education, the Commission on Teacher and
85 Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure and
86 Development, the Commission on School Accreditation, the
87 Mississippi Authority for Educational Television, the meetings of
88 the state textbook rating committees or other meetings authorized
89 by local school board policy.

90 (5) Upon retirement from employment, each licensed and
91 nonlicensed employee shall be paid for not more than thirty (30)
92 days of unused accumulated leave earned while employed by the
93 school district in which the employee is last employed. Such
94 payment for licensed employees shall be made by the school
95 district at a rate equal to the amount paid to substitute teachers
96 and for nonlicensed employees, the payment shall be made by the
97 school district at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. The
98 payment shall be treated in the same manner for retirement
99 purposes as a lump sum payment for personal leave as provided in
100 Section 25-11-103(e). Any remaining lawfully credited unused
101 leave, for which payment has not been made, shall be certified to
102 the Public Employees' Retirement System in the same manner and
103 subject to the same limitations as otherwise provided by law for
104 unused leave. No payment for unused accumulated leave may be made

105 to either a licensed or nonlicensed employee at termination or
106 separation from service for any purpose other than for the purpose
107 of retirement.

108 (6) The school board may adopt rules and regulations which
109 will reasonably aid to implement the policy of sick and personal
110 leave, including, but not limited to, rules and regulations having
111 the following general effect:

112 (a) Requiring the absent employee to furnish the
113 certificate of a physician or dentist or other medical
114 practitioner as to the illness of the absent licensed employee,
115 where the absence is for four (4) or more consecutive school days,
116 or for two (2) consecutive school days immediately preceding or
117 following a nonschool day;

118 (b) Providing penalties, by way of full deduction from
119 salary, or entry on the work record of the employee, or other
120 appropriate penalties, for any materially false statement by the
121 employee as to the cause of absence;

122 (c) Forfeiture of accumulated or future sick leave, if
123 the absence of the employee is caused by optional dental or
124 medical treatment or surgery which could, without medical risk,
125 have been provided, furnished or performed at a time when school
126 was not in session;

127 (d) Enlarging, increasing or providing greater sick or
128 personal leave allowances than the minimum standards established
129 by this section in the discretion of the school board of each
130 school district.

131 (7) School boards may include in their budgets provisions
132 for the payment of substitute employees, necessitated because of
133 the absence of regular licensed employees. All such substitute
134 employees shall be paid wholly from district funds, except as
135 otherwise provided for long-term substitute teachers in Section
136 37-19-20. Such school boards, in their discretion, also may pay,
137 from district funds other than adequate education program funds,
138 the whole or any part of the salaries of all employees granted
139 leaves for the purpose of special studies or training.

140 (8) The school board may further adopt rules and regulations
141 which will reasonably implement such leave policies for all other
142 nonlicensed and hourly paid school employees as the board deems
143 appropriate.

144 (9) Vacation leave granted to either licensed or nonlicensed
145 employees shall be synonymous with personal leave. Unused
146 vacation or personal leave accumulated by licensed employees in
147 excess of the maximum five (5) days which may be carried over from
148 one (1) year to the next may be converted to sick leave not to
149 exceed the conversion of ten (10) days of personal or vacation
150 leave days to sick days per year. In the case of unused vacation
151 or personal leave accumulated by nonlicensed employees, no more
152 than ten (10) days of unused personal or vacation leave may be
153 converted to sick leave per year. Any personal or vacation leave
154 previously converted to sick leave under a lawfully adopted policy
155 before the effective date of Senate Bill No. 2297, 2004 Regular
156 Session, shall be recognized as accrued leave by the local school
157 district and available for use by the employee. The leave
158 converted under a lawfully adopted policy may be certified to the
159 Public Employees' Retirement System upon termination of employment
160 and any such leave previously converted and certified to the
161 Public Employees' Retirement System shall be recognized.

162 (10) (a) For the purposes of this subsection, the following
163 words and phrases shall have the meaning ascribed in this
164 paragraph unless the context requires otherwise:

165 (i) "Catastrophic injury or illness" means a
166 life-threatening injury or illness of an employee or a member of
167 an employee's immediate family that totally incapacitates the
168 employee from work, as verified by a licensed physician, and
169 forces the employee to exhaust all leave time earned by that
170 employee, resulting in the loss of compensation from the state for
171 the employee. Conditions that are short-term in nature,
172 including, but not limited to, common illnesses such as influenza
173 and the measles, and common injuries, are not catastrophic.
174 Chronic illnesses or injuries, such as cancer or major surgery,

175 that result in intermittent absences from work and that are
176 long-term in nature and require long recuperation periods may be
177 considered catastrophic.

178 (ii) "Immediate family" means spouse, parent,
179 stepparent, sibling, child or stepchild.

180 (b) Any school district employee may donate a portion
181 of his or her unused accumulated personal leave or sick leave to
182 another employee of the same or another school district who is
183 suffering from a catastrophic injury or illness or who has a
184 member of his or her immediate family suffering from a
185 catastrophic injury or illness, in accordance with the following:

186 (i) The employee donating the leave (the "donor
187 employee") shall designate the employee who is to receive the
188 leave (the "recipient employee") and the amount of unused
189 accumulated personal leave and sick leave that is to be donated,
190 and shall notify the school district superintendent or his
191 designee of his or her designation.

192 (ii) The maximum amount of unused accumulated
193 personal leave that an employee may donate to any other employee
194 may not exceed a number of days that would leave the donor
195 employee with fewer than seven (7) days of personal leave
196 remaining, and the maximum amount of unused accumulated sick leave
197 that an employee may donate to any other employee may not exceed
198 fifty percent (50%) of the unused accumulated sick leave of the
199 donor employee.

200 (iii) An employee must have exhausted all of his
201 or her available leave before he or she will be eligible to
202 receive any leave donated by another employee. Eligibility for
203 donated leave shall be based upon review and approval by the donor
204 employee's supervisor.

205 (iv) Before an employee may receive donated leave,
206 he or she must provide the school district superintendent or his
207 designee with a physician's statement that states the beginning
208 date of the catastrophic injury or illness, a description of the
209 injury or illness, and a prognosis for recovery and the

210 anticipated date that the recipient employee will be able to
211 return to work.

212 (v) If the total amount of leave that is donated
213 to any employee is not used by the recipient employee, the whole
214 days of donated leave shall be returned to the donor employees on
215 a pro rata basis, based on the ratio of the number of days of
216 leave donated by each donor employee to the total number of days
217 of leave donated by all donor employees.

218 (vi) Donated leave shall not be used in lieu of
219 disability retirement.

220 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
221 and after its passage.

**Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and
inserting in lieu thereof the following:**

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-7-307, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO CLARIFY THAT ASSISTANT TEACHERS RECEIVE THE SAME NUMBER OF
3 MINIMUM SICK LEAVE DAYS AS LICENSED TEACHERS; TO PROVIDE THAT A
4 CERTAIN NUMBER OF VACATION LEAVE DAYS GRANTED TO EITHER LICENSED
5 OR NONLICENSED EMPLOYEES MAY BE CONVERTED TO SICK LEAVE DAYS EACH
6 YEAR; TO CLARIFY THE DEFINITION OF "CATASTROPHIC INJURY OR
7 ILLNESS" FOR TEACHER LEAVE PURPOSES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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Don Richardson
Clerk of the House of Representatives