

By: Senator(s) Tollison

To: Judiciary, Division B

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
SENATE BILL NO. 2957

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 43-1-55, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO  
2 DELETE THE REPEALERS ON VARIOUS OTHER SECTIONS OF LAW, INCLUDING  
3 SECTION 43-21-261, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH PROVIDES FOR  
4 CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE RECORDS OF THE YOUTH COURT; SECTION  
5 43-21-353, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH IMPOSES A DUTY TO  
6 REPORT A REASONABLE SUSPICION OF CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT; SECTION  
7 43-21-355, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH PROVIDES IMMUNITY TO  
8 ANYONE WHO REPORTS IN GOOD FAITH SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT;  
9 SECTION 43-21-603, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH CREATES THE  
10 DISPOSITION HEARING PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH COURT; SECTION 93-21-23,  
11 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH PROVIDES GOOD FAITH IMMUNITY TO  
12 ANYONE REPORTING DOMESTIC ABUSE; AND SECTION 93-3-7, MISSISSIPPI  
13 CODE OF 1972, WHICH IS THE CRIMINAL STATUTE CREATING AS OFFENSES  
14 THE CRIMES OF SIMPLE AND AGGRAVATED ASSAULT AND DOMESTIC ABUSE;  
15 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

17 **SECTION 1.** Section 43-1-55, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
18 amended as follows:

19 43-1-55. (1) The Office of Family and Children's Services  
20 shall devise formal social worker standards for employment and  
21 service delivery designed to measure the quality of services  
22 delivered to clients, as well as the timeliness of services. Each  
23 social worker shall be assessed annually by a supervisor who is  
24 knowledgeable in the standards promulgated. The standards shall  
25 be applicable to all social workers working under the office.

26 (2) The Office of Family and Children's Services shall  
27 devise formal standards for child protection specialists of the  
28 Department of Human Services who are not licensed social workers.  
29 Those standards shall require that:

30 (a) In order to be employed as a child protection  
31 specialist, a person must have a bachelor's degree in either  
32 psychology, sociology, nursing, criminal justice or a related  
33 field, or a graduate degree in either law, psychology, sociology,

34 nursing, criminal justice or a related field. The determination  
35 of what is a related field shall be made by certification of the  
36 State Personnel Board; and

37 (b) Before a person may provide services as a child  
38 protection specialist, the person shall complete four (4) weeks of  
39 intensive training provided by the training unit of the Office of  
40 Family and Children's Services, and shall take and receive a  
41 passing score on the certification test administered by the  
42 training unit upon completion of the four-week training. Upon  
43 receiving a passing score on the certification test, the person  
44 shall be certified as a child protection specialist by the  
45 Department of Human Services. Any person who does not receive a  
46 passing score on the certification test shall not be employed or  
47 maintain employment as a child protection specialist for the  
48 department. Further, a person, qualified as a child protection  
49 specialist through the procedures set forth above, shall not  
50 conduct forensic interviews of children until the specialist  
51 receives additional specialized training in child forensic  
52 interview protocols and techniques by a course or curriculum  
53 approved by the Department of Human Services to be not less than  
54 forty (40) hours.

55 (3) For the purpose of providing services in child abuse or  
56 neglect cases, youth court proceedings, vulnerable adults cases,  
57 and such other cases as designated by the Executive Director of  
58 Human Services, the caseworker or service provider may be a child  
59 protection specialist whose work is overseen by a licensed social  
60 worker.

61 (4) The Department of Human Services and the Office of  
62 Family and Children's Services shall seek to employ and use  
63 licensed social workers to provide the services of the office, and  
64 may employ and use child protection specialists to provide those  
65 services only in counties in which there is not a sufficient

66 number of licensed social workers to adequately provide those  
67 services in the county.

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