

By: Representative Upshaw

To: Judiciary B;  
Appropriations

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1294

1 AN ACT TO ENACT THE REGISTRATION OF INTERIOR DESIGNERS ACT;  
2 TO SET FORTH DEFINITIONS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE REGISTRATION OF  
3 INTERIOR DESIGNERS SHALL BE UNDER MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF  
4 ARCHITECTURE, ACTING THROUGH AN ADVISORY COMMITTEE APPOINTED BY  
5 THE GOVERNOR; TO REQUIRE THAT ANY PERSON SEEKING TO PRACTICE THE  
6 PROFESSION OF INTERIOR DESIGN SHALL BE REGISTERED UNDER THIS ACT;  
7 TO SET FORTH THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS FOR APPLICANTS FOR  
8 REGISTRATION; TO GRANDFATHER IN THOSE INTERIOR DESIGNERS WHO APPLY  
9 FOR REGISTRATION WITHIN THREE YEARS OF THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE  
10 ACT; TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD TO SET FEES FOR REGISTRATION AND  
11 RENEWAL THEREOF; TO PROVIDE EXEMPTIONS FROM THE PROVISIONS OF THE  
12 ACT; TO SET FORTH PROCEDURES FOR DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS; TO SET  
13 FORTH PROHIBITIONS UNDER THE ACT AND PRESCRIBE PENALTIES FOR SAME;  
14 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

16 **SECTION 1.** (1) This act shall be known as the "Registration  
17 of Interior Designers Act."

18 (2) The purpose of this legislation is to safeguard public  
19 health and life safety, to promote the public welfare by improving  
20 the quality of human environmental design, and to limit the  
21 practice of interior design to those persons having specific  
22 design education, experience and examination as defined in this  
23 act.

24 **SECTION 2.** The following words and phrases shall have the  
25 meanings set forth in this section, unless the context clearly  
26 requires otherwise:

27 (a) "Registered interior designer" means a person  
28 registered under this act who is qualified by education,  
29 experience and examination to affect the function, safety and  
30 quality of interior spaces and who renders or offers to render  
31 interior design services.

32 (b) "Interior design" means designs, consultations,  
33 studies, drawings, specifications, and the administration of

34 design construction contracts relating to nonstructural interior  
35 elements of a building or structure. The term includes, but is  
36 not limited to, space planning, finishes, furnishings, and the  
37 design for fabrication of nonstructural or nonseismic elements  
38 within and surrounding interior spaces of a building or space.  
39 Specifically excluded from the term is the design of or  
40 responsibility for architectural and engineering work, except for  
41 specifications for fixtures and their location within interior  
42 spaces; and the construction of structural, mechanical, plumbing,  
43 heating, air conditioning, ventilation, electrical or vertical  
44 transportation systems, fire-rated vertical shafts in multistory  
45 structures, fire-related protection of structural elements, smoke  
46 evacuation and compartmentalization, sprinkler systems, and  
47 emergency alarm systems.

48 (c) "Board" means the Mississippi State Board of  
49 Architecture as defined in Chapter 1, Title 73, Mississippi Code  
50 of 1972.

51 (d) "License" means a certificate granted by the board  
52 authorizing the holder thereof to practice interior design as a  
53 design professional.

54 (e) "Diversified and appropriate interior design  
55 experience" means the practice of those skills and tasks as  
56 contemplated by the definition of "interior design."

57 (f) "Nonstructural or nonseismic" means interior  
58 elements or components that are not load-bearing or do not assist  
59 in the seismic design and do not require design computations for a  
60 building's structure. Common nonstructural elements or components  
61 include, but are not limited to, ceiling and partition systems.  
62 These elements employ normal and typical bracing conventions and  
63 are not part of the structural integrity of the building.

64 (g) "Responsible supervisory control" is the direct  
65 responsibility of a registered interior designer of the work and  
66 the decision-making process, i.e., to review, enforce and control

67 compliance with all design criteria and life safety requirements.  
68 Each location designated for the practice of interior design must  
69 have at that location a registered interior designer who has  
70 regulatory responsibility for the interior design work at that  
71 location.

72 **SECTION 3.** No person shall practice interior design in this  
73 state or use the title "registered interior designer" or any  
74 variation thereof on any sign, title, card or device to indicate  
75 that such person is practicing interior design or is a "registered  
76 interior designer," unless the person has secured from the board a  
77 license to practice as a registered interior designer in the  
78 manner and in compliance with the provisions of this act. Every  
79 holder of a current registration shall display it in a conspicuous  
80 place in his principal office or place of employment.

81 **SECTION 4.** (1) A "registered interior designer" is a person  
82 registered to practice interior design in this state as provided  
83 in this act.

84 (2) Only individuals registered under this act may render  
85 interior design services. No person shall be identified as a  
86 "registered interior designer" or any variation thereof who is not  
87 registered by this state.

88 (3) Registration requires compliance with the requirements  
89 of applicable building codes, fire codes and local regulations and  
90 defines minimum requirements for safe practice. It is also the  
91 intent of these laws to prohibit any person who is not registered  
92 or who falls below minimum competency or who otherwise presents a  
93 danger to the public from practicing in this state.

94 (4) Registration shall be renewed biannually.

95 **SECTION 5.** (1) The board shall receive applications for  
96 registration as a registered interior designer on forms prescribed  
97 and furnished by the board. Upon receipt of an application, the  
98 board may approve same, providing the applicant meets the  
99 following requirements:

100           (a) The applicant must have a degree in interior design  
101 from a program approved and accredited by the Council for Interior  
102 Design or holds a bachelor's degree in interior design from an  
103 approved college or university approved by the board. There will  
104 be a five-year grace period beginning on July 1, 2007, during  
105 which time applicants who hold a bachelor's degree in interior  
106 design from a college or university need not register under this  
107 act.

108           (b) (i) The applicant must have been enrolled for a  
109 minimum of two (2) years in, and have completed all requirements  
110 of a practical work internship development program that will be  
111 prepared, adopted and approved by the board and must have received  
112 from the board a certification that the applicant has met or  
113 exceeded the work internship requirements. The work internship  
114 development program shall include, but not be limited to, the  
115 following subjects:

- 116                           1. Design and construction documents;
- 117                           2. Construction administration;
- 118                           3. Office management; and
- 119                           4. Related special activities.

120           (ii) If the applicant can provide sufficient and  
121 satisfactory evidence that he or she is unable to obtain the work  
122 internship development program certification, the board may accept  
123 in lieu thereof certification by the applicant that he or she has  
124 completed not less than three (3) continuous years of being  
125 engaged in the practice of interior design under the supervision  
126 of a licensed architect or registered interior designer. Such  
127 certification shall be on such terms, conditions and requirements  
128 as the board may establish.

129           (c) The applicant must have passed any specific  
130 national examination designated by the board.

131           (d) (i) The applicant must exhibit to the board his  
132 good standing in the profession and his moral character. Any of

133 the following acts shall preclude an applicant's eligibility as a  
134 candidate for registration:

135           1. Conviction by any court for commission of  
136 any felony or any crime involving moral turpitude.

137           2. Conviction by any court of a misdemeanor  
138 involving fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.

139           3. Misstatement of misrepresentation of fact  
140 by the applicant in connection with the applicant's application  
141 for registration in this state or another jurisdiction.

142           4. Violation of any of the rules of conduct  
143 required of applicants or interior designers as adopted by board;

144           5. Practicing interior design, or  
145 representing one's self as capable of practicing interior design,  
146 in this state in violation of this act.

147           (ii) The board may admit an applicant otherwise  
148 precluded from consideration because of the prohibitions imposed  
149 in this paragraph if the board determines that the applicant has  
150 shown clear and convincing evidence of rehabilitation and reform.  
151 Such decision is in the sole discretion of the board and upon such  
152 terms, conditions and evidence as the board may require.

153           (e) An applicant who has passed the specific national  
154 examination designated by the board before January 1, 2007, shall  
155 be eligible to apply for registration as a registered interior  
156 designer without completing the work internship requirements set  
157 forth in paragraph (b) of this subsection.

158           (2) The board shall adopt rules and regulations for the  
159 eligibility, examination and registration of applicants desiring  
160 to practice interior design in accordance with this section and  
161 may amend, modify or repeal such rules and regulations.

162           (3) The board may require that the applicant appear before  
163 the board for a personal interview.

164           **SECTION 6.** The board shall register any person who applies  
165 for registration and remits the application and initial fees

166 within three (3) years after the effective date of this act  
167 regardless of whether the person meets the requirement of Section  
168 5 of this act, provided that the applicant:

169 (a) (i) Possesses ten (10) years of continuous  
170 experience within the past fourteen (14) years as an interior  
171 designer and holds an interior design degree; and

172 (ii) Has completed twenty-four (24) hours of  
173 board-approved continuing education classes relating to building  
174 and barrier-free codes, and health, safety and welfare concerns,  
175 which shall be in addition to any other continuing education the  
176 board may require for registered interior designer; or

177 (b) (i) Possesses fifteen (15) years of continuous  
178 experience within the past eighteen (18) years as an interior  
179 designer or a combination of experience and education which totals  
180 fifteen (15) years; and

181 (ii) Has completed thirty-two (32) hours of  
182 board-approved continuing education classes relating to building  
183 and barrier-free codes, and health, safety and welfare concerns,  
184 which shall be in addition to any other continuing education the  
185 board may require for registered interior designers.

186 **SECTION 7.** (1) There shall be an advisory committee to the  
187 board to consist of five (5) members appointed by the Governor.  
188 Three (3) members of the advisory committee shall be nominated by  
189 the Mississippi Districts of the American Society of Interior  
190 Designers and two (2) members of the committee shall be nominated  
191 by the Delta Regional Chapter of International Interior Design  
192 Association. At least three (3) times the number of persons to be  
193 appointed shall be nominated from each group. The five (5)  
194 initial appointments to the committee shall be for terms of one  
195 (1), two (2), three (3), four (4) and five (5) years, with the  
196 term of each initial appointee to be in the discretion of the  
197 Governor. Each person who is initially appointed to the committee  
198 shall meet the qualifications set forth in Section 5 of this act.

199 Appointments made after the initial appointments shall be for  
200 terms of five (5) years and shall be limited to those nominated  
201 persons who are also registered interior designers. Each member  
202 of the committee shall hold office until the appointment and  
203 qualification of his successor. Vacancies occurring before the  
204 expiration of the term shall be filled by appointment in like  
205 manner for the unexpired term. The Governor may remove any of the  
206 members of the advisory committee for inefficiency, neglect of  
207 duty or dishonorable conduct.

208 (2) The committee shall review, approve or disapprove, and  
209 make recommendations with regard to all applications for  
210 certification as a registered interior designer. At the direction  
211 of the board, the committee shall also review and investigate any  
212 charges brought against a registered interior designer and make  
213 findings of fact and recommendations to the board concerning any  
214 disciplinary action which the committee deems necessary and  
215 proper.

216 (3) Each member of the committee shall be entitled to  
217 receive a per diem in such amounts as shall be set by the board,  
218 but not to exceed the amount provided for in Section 25-3-69, and  
219 shall be reimbursed for expenses under the provisions of Section  
220 25-3-41 that are incurred in the actual performances of duties.

221 (4) Before entering upon the discharge of his duties, each  
222 member of the committee shall take an oath of office and file it  
223 with the Secretary of State. The committee shall elect at the  
224 first meeting of every calendar year from among its members, a  
225 chairman and a secretary to hold office for one (1) year.

226 **SECTION 8.** (1) The board shall require that every  
227 registered interior designer pay a biennial registration renewal  
228 fee in an amount set by the board. The renewal fee shall be due  
229 and payable on the first day of January of each year in which the  
230 fee is required to be paid and shall become delinquent after the  
231 thirty-first day of January of such year. If the renewal fee is

232 not paid before it becomes delinquent, a penalty fee shall be  
233 assessed in an amount per month as set by the board.

234 (2) If the renewal fee and penalty are not paid before the  
235 first day of June in the year in which they become due, the  
236 registered interior designer's certificate of registration shall  
237 be suspended. Except as provided in Section 15 (20) of this act,  
238 the certificate may be reinstated upon the payment of the renewal  
239 fee, the penalty fees and a reinstatement fee as set by the board,  
240 and such other proof of the registered interior designer's  
241 qualifications as may be required in the discretion of the board.

242 (3) The board shall send a receipt and certificate of  
243 registration to each registered interior designer promptly upon  
244 payment of the renewal fee.

245 **SECTION 9.** Each registered interior designer shall obtain a  
246 seal as prescribed by the board. Any interior design construction  
247 documents, which may include drawings, plans, specifications, or  
248 reports prepared or issued by the registered interior designer and  
249 being filed for public record with any jurisdiction or local  
250 building department for the purposes of obtaining a building  
251 permit shall bear the signature and seal of the registered  
252 interior designer who prepared or approved the document and the  
253 date on which they were sealed. The seal shall be evidence of the  
254 authenticity of the document. Interior design construction  
255 documents bearing the seal of a registered interior designer shall  
256 be accepted for filing by the appropriate jurisdiction.

257 **SECTION 10.** Any interior designer residing outside this  
258 state may obtain a certificate to practice in the State of  
259 Mississippi by complying with Section 5 of this act. The board  
260 shall have the further right to exercise its discretion as to  
261 whether a nonresident interior designer shall be issued a  
262 certification of registration notwithstanding that the nonresident  
263 interior designer may be otherwise qualified under this act.



264           **SECTION 11.** The board shall not issue a temporary  
265 certificate of registration to practice interior design.

266           **SECTION 12.** Each registered interior designer shall be  
267 required to meet the continuing education requirements as set  
268 forth by the board.

269           **SECTION 13.** The board shall set forth and regulate the  
270 conduct and professional ethics of those registered under this  
271 act.

272           **SECTION 14.** (1) This act shall not apply to:

273                   (a) Licensed architects or engineers registered under  
274 applicable state laws, provided that such architects or engineers  
275 shall not refer to themselves as registered interior designers  
276 unless registered as such under this act.

277                   (b) Any employees of a retail establishment regarding  
278 interior decoration or furnishings on the premises of the retail  
279 establishment or in the furtherance of a retail sale or  
280 prospective retail sale, provided that such persons shall not  
281 refer to themselves as registered interior designers unless  
282 registered as such under this act.

283                   (c) Any persons who provide decorative services or  
284 assistance in selection of surface materials, window treatments,  
285 wall coverings, paint, floor coverings, surface-mounted fixtures,  
286 and loose furnishings, provided that such persons shall not refer  
287 to themselves as registered interior designers unless registered  
288 as such under this act.

289           (2) The term "interior designer" may be used as long as  
290 there is no reference to the terms "certified," "licensed" or  
291 "registered" in the same document, advertisement or publication  
292 that contains the term "interior designer."

293           **SECTION 15.** (1) Except as otherwise provided in Section  
294 15(20) of this act, the board shall have the power to revoke,  
295 suspend or annul the registration of a registered interior

296 designer or reprimand, censure or otherwise discipline a  
297 registered interior designer.

298 (2) The board, upon satisfactory proof and in accordance  
299 with the provisions of this act, may take disciplinary action  
300 against any registered interior designer for any of the following  
301 reasons:

302 (a) Violating any of the provisions of this act, or the  
303 rules, regulations or standards of ethics or conduct duly adopted  
304 and promulgated by the board pertaining to the practice of  
305 interior design.

306 (b) Committing fraud, deceit or misrepresentation in  
307 obtaining a certificate of registration.

308 (c) Committing gross negligence, malpractice,  
309 incompetence or misconduct in the practice of interior design.

310 (d) Committing any professional misconduct, as defined  
311 by the board through bylaws, rules and regulations and standards  
312 of conduct and ethics, provided that professional misconduct shall  
313 not include bidding on contracts for a price.

314 (e) Practicing or offering to practice interior design  
315 under an expired registration or while under suspension or  
316 revocation of a registration unless the suspension or revocation  
317 is abated through probation.

318 (f) Practicing interior design under an assumed or  
319 fictitious name.

320 (g) Being convicted by any court of a felony.

321 (h) Willfully misleading or defrauding any person  
322 employing him or her as a registered interior designer by any  
323 artifice or false statement.

324 (i) Having any undisclosed financial or personal  
325 interest which compromises his or her obligation to a specific  
326 client.

327 (j) Obtaining a certificate by fraud or deceit.

328 (k) Violating any of the provisions of this act.

329 (1) Noncompliance with a child support order.

330 (3) Any person may prefer charges against any other person  
331 for committing any of the acts set forth in subsection (2) of this  
332 section. Such charges need not be sworn to, may be made upon  
333 actual knowledge, or upon information and belief, and shall be  
334 filed with the board.

335 (4) The board shall investigate all charges filed with it  
336 and, upon finding reasonable cause to believe that the charges are  
337 not frivolous, unfounded or filed in bad faith, may, in its  
338 discretion, cause a hearing to be held, at a time and place fixed  
339 by the board, regarding the charges and may compel the accused by  
340 subpoena to appear before the board to respond to said charges.

341 (5) No disciplinary action may be taken under this act until  
342 the accused has been furnished with both a statement of the  
343 charges against him and notice of the time and place of the  
344 hearing, which shall be personally served on the accused or mailed  
345 by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, to the  
346 last known business or residence address of the accused not less  
347 than thirty (30) days before the date fixed for the hearing.

348 (6) At any hearing held under the provisions of this  
349 section, the board shall have the power to subpoena witnesses and  
350 compel their attendance and require the production of any books,  
351 paper or documents. The hearing shall be conducted before the  
352 full board with the president of the board serving as the  
353 presiding officer. Counsel for the board shall present all  
354 evidence relating to the charges. All evidence shall be presented  
355 under oath, which may be administered by any member of the board,  
356 and thereafter the proceedings may, if necessary, be transcribed  
357 in full by a court reporter and filed as part of the record in the  
358 case. Copies of the transcription may be provided to any party to  
359 the proceedings at a cost to be fixed by the board.

360 (7) All witnesses who shall be subpoenaed and who shall  
361 appear in any proceedings before the board shall receive the same

362 fee and mileage as allowed by law in judicial civil proceedings  
363 and all such fees shall be taxed as part of the costs of the case.

364 (8) In any proceedings before the board in which any witness  
365 shall fail or refuse to attend upon subpoena issued by the board,  
366 shall refuse to testify or shall refuse to produce any books and  
367 papers, the production of which is called for by the subpoena, the  
368 attendance of such witness and the giving of his testimony and the  
369 production of the books and papers, shall be enforced by any court  
370 of competent jurisdiction of this state in the manner provided for  
371 the enforcement of attendance and testimony of witnesses in civil  
372 cases in the courts of this state.

373 (9) The accused shall have the right to be present at the  
374 hearing in person, by counsel or other representative, or both.  
375 The accused shall have the right to present evidence and to  
376 examine and cross-examine all witnesses. The board may continue  
377 or recess the hearing as may be necessary.

378 (10) At the conclusion of the hearing, the board may either  
379 decide the issue at the time or take the case under advisement for  
380 further deliberation. The board shall render its decision not  
381 more than forty-five (45) days after the close of the hearing, and  
382 shall forward to the last known business or residence address of  
383 the accused by certified or registered mail, return receipt  
384 requested, a written statement of the decision of the board.

385 (11) If a majority of the board finds the accused guilty of  
386 the charges filed, the board may:

387 (a) Issue a public or private reprimand;

388 (b) Suspend or revoke the registration of the accused,  
389 if the accused is a registrant;

390 (c) In lieu of or in addition to such reprimand,  
391 suspension or revocation, assess and levy upon the guilty party an  
392 administrative fine of not less than One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)  
393 nor more than Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each  
394 violation.

395           (12) An administrative fine assessed and levied under this  
396 section shall be paid to the board upon the expiration of the  
397 period allowed for appeal of such penalties under this section, or  
398 may be paid sooner if the guilty party elects. Money collected by  
399 the board under this section shall be deposited into a special  
400 fund, which is created in the State Treasury. Monies in the  
401 special fund shall be disbursed by the Department of Finance and  
402 Administration, in the discretion of the State Board of  
403 Architecture, to offset the expenses of administering the  
404 provisions of the "Registration of Interior Designers Act."  
405 Unexpended amounts remaining in the special fund at the end of a  
406 fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and any  
407 interest earned on amounts in the special fund shall be deposited  
408 to the credit of the special fund.

409           (13) When payment of an administrative fine assessed and  
410 levied by the board under this section is not paid when due, the  
411 board shall have the power to institute and maintain proceedings  
412 in its name for enforcement of payment in the chancery court of  
413 the county of the residence of the guilty party and if the guilty  
414 party be a nonresident of the State of Mississippi, such  
415 proceedings shall be in the Chancery Court of the First Judicial  
416 District of Hinds County, Mississippi.

417           (14) When the board has taken a disciplinary action under  
418 this section, the board may, in its discretion, stay such action  
419 and place the guilty party on probation for a period not to exceed  
420 one (1) year, upon the condition that the guilty party shall not  
421 further violate either the law of the State of Mississippi  
422 pertaining to the practice of interior design or the rules and  
423 regulations, or standards of conduct and ethics promulgated by the  
424 board.

425           (15) The board, in its discretion, may assess and tax any  
426 part of all costs of any disciplinary proceedings conducted under

427 this section against the accused, if the accused is found guilty  
428 of the charges.

429 (16) The power and authority of the board to assess and levy  
430 the administrative fines provided for in this section shall not be  
431 affected or diminished by any other proceedings, civil or  
432 criminal, concerning the same violation or violations.

433 (17) The board, for sufficient cause, may reissue a revoked  
434 registration whenever a majority of the board members vote to do  
435 so, but in no event shall a revoked registration be issued within  
436 two (2) years of the revocation. A new license of registration  
437 required to replace a revoked, lost, mutilated or destroyed  
438 license may be issued, subject to the rules of the board, for a  
439 charge not to exceed Twenty-five Dollars (\$25.00).

440 (18) The board may direct the advisory committee to review  
441 and investigate any charges brought against any registered  
442 interior designer under this chapter and to hold the hearings  
443 provided for in this section and to make findings of that fact and  
444 recommendations to the board concerning the disposition of such  
445 charges.

446 (19) Nothing herein contained shall preclude the board or  
447 advisory committee from initiating proceedings in any case. The  
448 advisory committee shall furnish legal advice and assistance to  
449 the board whenever such service is requested.

450 (20) If a person who holds a certificate of registration  
451 under this act is subject to a court order to pay child support,  
452 his certificate of registration shall be suspended. The  
453 procedures pertaining to, including the reinstatement and payment  
454 of any fees therefor, of a registration that has been suspended  
455 for noncompliance with a child support order shall be governed by  
456 the provisions of Section 93-11-151 et seq., Mississippi Code of  
457 1972. If there is any conflict between any provision of this act  
458 and any provisions of Sections 93-11-157 or 93-11-163, the  
459 provisions of the latter shall control.

460           SECTION 16. (1) It shall be a misdemeanor for any person  
461 to:

462           (a) Present himself as a registered interior designer  
463 unless duly certified and registered under this act.

464           (b) Present as his own the certificate of registration  
465 of another.

466           (c) Give false or forged evidence to the board or a  
467 member thereof in obtaining a certificate of registration.

468           (d) Falsely impersonate any other practitioner of like  
469 or different name.

470           (e) Use or attempt to use a certificate of registration  
471 that has been revoked.

472           (f) Otherwise violate any of the provisions of this  
473 act.

474           (2) Any person who is convicted of a misdemeanor as  
475 described in subsection (1) shall be punished by a fine of not  
476 less than Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) and not more than One  
477 Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) or imprisonment for not more than one  
478 (1) year in the county jail, or both.

479           (3) If any person violates any of the provisions of this  
480 act, the secretary of the board, upon direction of a majority of  
481 the board, acting through an attorney employed by the board, shall  
482 apply in any chancery court of competent jurisdiction for an  
483 injunction of temporary restraining order pursuant to the  
484 Mississippi Rules of Civil Procedure enjoining such violation or  
485 for an order enforcing compliance with the provisions of this act.  
486 If at such hearing, it is established that such person has  
487 violated or is violating this act the court, in addition to  
488 enjoining such violation or enforcing compliance with this act,  
489 may award all costs and expenses, including reasonable attorney's  
490 fees, to the board. In the case of a violation of an order issued  
491 under this subsection (3), the court may punish the offender for  
492 contempt of court and shall fine such offender a sum of not less

493 than Two Hundred Fifty Dollars (\$250.00) per offense. Each day of  
494 such violation shall constitute a distinct and separate offense.

495 **SECTION 17.** All courts of competent jurisdiction within the  
496 State of Mississippi are hereby empowered to hear, try and  
497 determine violations of the act without indictment and to impose  
498 in full the punishment of fines and imprisonment herein  
499 prescribed. All violations of this act, when reported to the  
500 board and duly substantiated by affidavits or other satisfactory  
501 evidence, shall be investigated by it, and if the report is found  
502 to be true and the evidence substantiated, the board shall report  
503 such violations to the Attorney General and request prompt  
504 prosecution.

505 **SECTION 18.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
506 and after July 1, 2007.