AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR REALIGNMENT OF THE STARTING SALARIES OF SOCIAL WORKERS EMPLOYED BY THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI IN ORDER TO BRING THEIR SALARIES CLOSER TO THE MEDIAN SALARIES FOR THE SOUTH REGION; TO DIRECT THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS NECESSARY TO PROVIDE FOR THOSE SALARY REALIGNMENTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) The purpose for realigning the salaries of social workers that are employed by the State of Mississippi is to offer salaries that are in alignment with the regional salaries for social workers in order to attract qualified social workers for the State of Mississippi. In order to receive a salary realignment, the social workers must be appropriately licensed.

(2) Based on a national study of licensed social workers conducted by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), Center for Workforce Studies, the South Region has the lowest salaries for social workers. The survey found that the median salary for licensed bachelor level social workers is Thirty-three Thousand Six Hundred Twenty-eight Dollars ($33,628.00); licensed master social workers is Forty-six Thousand Eight Hundred Forty-five Dollars ($46,845.00); and licensed Ph.D social workers is Fifty-eight Thousand Three Hundred Ninety Dollars ($58,390.00). Therefore, in order to bring the salaries of social workers employed by the State of Mississippi to levels that are closer to the median salaries for this region, the Variable Compensation Plan shall be adjusted to ensure that, beginning on July 1, 2007:

(a) The annual starting salary of each individual employed by the State of Mississippi who possesses a social work
license at the bachelor's level and is a licensed social worker shall be no less than Twenty-eight Thousand Dollars ($28,000.00).

(b) The annual starting salary of each individual employed by the State of Mississippi who possesses a social work license at the master's level and is a licensed master social worker or licensed certified social worker shall be no less than Thirty-eight Thousand Dollars ($38,000.00).

(3) The Legislature shall appropriate the funds necessary to provide for the salary realignments provided for in this act.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2007.