

By: Representative Lamar

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1024

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE "MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS
2 SCHOOL SAFETY (MS ROSS) ACT" FOR THE PURPOSE OF AUTHORIZING THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY TO ASSIST LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT
4 AGENCIES AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES WITH THE COST OF EMPLOYING A
5 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER (SRO) AT EACH SCHOOL CAMPUS WITHIN THE
6 JURISDICTIONS OF THEIR LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNING AUTHORITIES;
7 TO DEFINE TERMINOLOGY; TO PROVIDE THAT THE ASSISTANCE OF EMPLOYING
8 SROS SHALL BE MADE AVAILABLE TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ELEMENTARY AND
9 SECONDARY SCHOOLS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ALLOCATE
10 75% OF THE COST FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF ONE SRO FOR EACH SCHOOL
11 CAMPUS; TO REQUIRE THE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AND/OR THE
12 SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARD TO PROVIDE THE REMAINING 25% OF THE COST
13 FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF ONE SRO FOR EACH SCHOOL CAMPUS WITHIN THEIR
14 JURISDICTION OF CONTROL; TO REQUIRE LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES
15 AND SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES TO MAKE JOINT APPLICATION TO THE
16 DEPARTMENT FOR THE APPROVAL OF ALLOCATION OF FUNDS; TO SPECIFY THE
17 INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN THE APPLICATION; TO PRESCRIBE THE
18 DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM INCLUDING THE REQUIREMENT OF A MEMORANDUM
19 OF UNDERSTANDING OR INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT BETWEEN A LOCAL LAW
20 ENFORCEMENT AGENCY AND A SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY; TO AMEND SECTION
21 37-7-321, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, IN CONFORMITY TO THE PRECEDING
22 PROVISIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

24 **SECTION 1.** (1) This act shall be known and may be cited as
25 the "Mississippi School Resource Officers School Safety (MS ROSS)
26 Act."



27 **SECTION 2.** As used in this act, the following terms shall
28 have the meanings ascribed herein unless context of use requires
29 otherwise:

30 (a) "Act" means the "Mississippi School Resource
31 Officers School Safety (MS ROSS) Act."

32 (b) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of
33 Public Safety.

34 (c) "Local law enforcement agency" means the local
35 police department or county sheriff's office that has primary law
36 enforcement authority over the schools within its jurisdiction.

37 (d) "Independent school" means a nonpublic school
38 operating within the State of Mississippi that:

39 (i) Is a member of the Midsouth Association of
40 Independent Schools (MAIS) and located in the State of
41 Mississippi;

42 (ii) Is accredited by a state, regional or
43 national accrediting organization, including the State Board of
44 Education; and

45 (iii) Is not subject to the purview of authority
46 of the State Board of Education, unless such school is accredited
47 by the board.

48 (d) "Program" means the Mississippi School Resource
49 Officers School Safety (MS ROSS) program, established in and
50 administered by the Mississippi Department of Public Safety.

51 (e) "School governing body" means:



52 (i) The local school board of a public school
53 district;

54 (ii) The charter school governing board of a
55 charter school; and

56 (iii) The board or other governing body of an
57 accredited independent school, as such governing body is
58 prescribed in the charter, bylaws or other governing documents of
59 the independent school.

60 (f) "School resource officer" or "SRO" means a sworn
61 law enforcement officer employed by a local law enforcement agency
62 and assigned to public or private elementary or secondary school
63 campuses to provide community policing efforts to combat school
64 violence and improve student and school safety in or on the
65 property of the school campus to which he or she is assigned.

66 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is hereby established the Mississippi
67 School Resource Officers School Safety (MS ROSS) program in the
68 Mississippi Department of Public Safety to provide funding,
69 pursuant to specific appropriation by the Legislature therefor, to
70 assist local law enforcement agencies in providing school resource
71 officers (SROs) to all public and private elementary and secondary
72 school campuses within the jurisdictions over which such agencies
73 have primary law enforcement authority for the purpose of
74 providing enhanced security and community policing in and around
75 all elementary and secondary schools therein.



76 (2) The MS ROSS program shall meet the following
77 requirements and standards:

78 (a) The program shall provide an incentive for law
79 enforcement agencies to build collaborative partnerships with the
80 school community and to use community policing efforts to combat
81 school violence and implement educational programs to improve
82 student and school safety;

83 (b) (i) The department shall commit the funds
84 appropriated by the Legislature under the authority of this act
85 for the administration of the program to provide seventy-five
86 percent (75%) of the cost associated with the employment of one
87 (1) school resource officer (SRO) by a local law enforcement
88 agency for each school campus within the jurisdiction over which
89 the agency has primary law enforcement authority, to be applied
90 towards the SRO's salary and benefits, training, equipment and
91 other costs deemed necessary by the local law enforcement agency
92 and school governing body to enable the SRO to perform his or her
93 duties in and around elementary and secondary schools up to a
94 total salary cost of Fifty-five Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00).
95 However, if the total cost associated with the employment of a SRO
96 employed under the provisions of this act exceeds Fifty-five
97 Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00) then the department shall only pay
98 seventy-five (75%) of the Fifty-five Thousand Dollars
99 (\$55,000.00), and any amount in excess of the required percentage



100 shall be borne by the local law enforcement agency or school
101 district, or combination of both; and

102 (ii) The department shall require the parties
103 making joint application for funds under paragraph (c) to commit
104 to paying the remaining twenty-five percent (25%) of the cost
105 associated with the employment of one (1) school resource officer
106 (SRO) by a local law enforcement agency for each school campus
107 under the authority and control of the school governing board that
108 falls within the jurisdiction of the local law enforcement agency,
109 to be applied towards the SRO's salary and benefits, training,
110 equipment and other costs deemed necessary by the local law
111 enforcement agency and school governing body to enable the SRO to
112 perform his or her duties in and around elementary and secondary
113 schools;

114 (c) Local law enforcement agencies and school governing
115 bodies shall make joint application to the department for funds
116 appropriated by the Legislature under the authority of subsection
117 (1) of this section for the purpose of funding the employment of
118 SROs in amount prescribed in paragraph (b) of this subsection.
119 The joint application submitted by the local law enforcement
120 agency and school governing body shall, at a minimum:

121 (i) Identify the local law enforcement agency to
122 provide the school resource officers, and the name of chief law
123 enforcement officer of the agency;



124 (ii) Identify the school governing body to be
125 served by the local law enforcement agency, and the names of the
126 president of such governing body and the superintendent or head of
127 schools under the governing body's authority and control;

128 (iii) The total number of schools, the total
129 number of school campuses and the names of all schools under the
130 schools governing body's authority and control;

131 (iv) The names of the principals of each school
132 under the schools governing body's authority and control;

133 (v) The name, address and phone number of each
134 school campus to be served a school resource officer (SRO)

135 (vi) The proposed salary of each school resource
136 officer (SRO), with the acknowledged understanding that the
137 department will only pay the required percentage under paragraph
138 (b) of this subsection of salaries that do not exceed Fifty-five
139 Thousand Dollars (\$55,000.00); and

140 (vii) The approximate number of school resource
141 officers (SROs) necessary for employment to accomplish the goal of
142 assigning one (1) SRO to each school campus as required by this
143 act;

144 (d) The local law enforcement agency and the
145 appropriate school governing body shall enter into a Memorandum of
146 Understanding (MOU) or an interlocal agreement, signed by the
147 chief law enforcement officer and the appropriate school
148 officials, which provides:



149 (i) Documentation of the roles and
150 responsibilities to be undertaken by the law enforcement agency
151 and the educational school partners through this collaborative
152 effort;

153 (ii) That school resource officers (SROs) will be
154 official employees of the local law enforcement agency that has
155 primary law enforcement authority over the schools within its
156 jurisdiction;

157 (iii) Which party to the MOU or interlocal
158 agreement, the local law enforcement agency or school governing
159 body, will be financially responsible for funding the twenty-five
160 percent (25%) match of the cost associated with the employment of
161 each school resource officer (SRO) by a local law enforcement
162 agency, if only one (1) such party will bear the financial
163 responsibility;

164 (iv) If both parties to the MOU or interlocal
165 agreement will share the financial responsibility of funding the
166 required twenty-five percent (25%) match of the cost associated
167 with the employment of each school resource officer (SRO) by a
168 local law enforcement agency, then the MOU or interlocal agreement
169 shall stipulate the portion of the percentage of the matching
170 funds each party shall be obligated to commit for each SRO
171 employed and assigned to school campuses under the authority and
172 control of the school governing body; and



173 (v) A Narrative Addendum to document that school
174 resource officers (SROs) will be assigned to work in and around
175 public and private elementary or secondary school campuses and
176 provide supporting documentation in the following areas:

- 177 1. Problem identification and justification;
- 178 2. Community policing strategies to be used
179 by the SROs;
- 180 3. Quality and level of commitment to the
181 effort; and
- 182 4. The link to community policing.

183 (3) School resource officers (SROs) may serve in a variety
184 of roles, including, but not limited to, that of a law enforcement
185 officer, safety specialist, law-related educator, problem-solver
186 and community liaison. These officers may teach programs such as
187 crime prevention, substance abuse prevention and gang resistance,
188 as well as monitor and assist troubled students through mentoring
189 programs. The SROs may also identify physical changes in the
190 environment that may reduce crime in and around school campuses,
191 as well as assist in developing school policies which address
192 criminal activity and school safety.

193 (4) All agencies receiving funds through the Mississippi
194 School Resource Officers School Safety (MS ROSS) program are
195 required to send the individuals employed as school resource
196 officers (SROs) to the Mississippi Law Enforcement Officers'
197 Training Academy or a law enforcement training academy approved by



198 the Mississippi Department of Public Safety, where they shall be
199 required to participate in training through the Advanced Law
200 Enforcement Rapid Response Training Program at such academy.

201 (5) The Mississippi Department of Public Safety shall
202 promulgate rules and regulations prescribing procedures for the
203 application, expenditure requirements and the administration of
204 the Mississippi Community Oriented Policing Services in Schools
205 (MS ROSS) program established in this section, and shall make a
206 report on the implementation of the MS ROSS program with any
207 recommendations to the 2024 Regular Session of the Legislature.

208 **SECTION 4.** There is created a special fund in the State
209 Treasury, to be known as the "Mississippi School Resource Officers
210 School Safety (MS ROSS) Fund," to be administered by the
211 Commissioner of Public Safety, upon appropriation by the
212 Legislature, and from which the allocation of funds authorized by
213 this act shall be disbursed by the Mississippi Department of
214 Public Safety, to assist local law enforcement agencies and school
215 governing bodies with providing a percentage of the costs
216 associated with employing one (1) school attendance officer at
217 each public and private elementary and secondary school campus.
218 All monies shall be disbursed from the fund in compliance with the
219 guidelines, guidance, rules, regulations promulgated by the
220 department. Unexpended amounts remaining in the fund at the end
221 of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the State General Fund, and



222 any interest earned on amounts in the fund shall be deposited to
223 the credit of the fund.

224 **SECTION 5.** Section 37-7-321, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
225 amended as follows:

226 37-7-321. (1) (a) The school board of any school district
227 within the State of Mississippi, in its discretion, may employ one
228 or more persons as security personnel and may designate such
229 persons as peace officers in or on any property operated for
230 school purposes by such board upon their taking such oath and
231 making such bond as required of a constable of the county in which
232 the school district is situated.

233 (b) Local law enforcement agencies having primary law
234 enforcement authority over schools within their jurisdiction, in
235 conjunction with the school boards of every school district within
236 the State of Mississippi, through a Memorandum of Understanding
237 (MOU) or interlocal agreement, signed by the law enforcement
238 executive and the appropriate school official(s), shall employ
239 individuals to serve as school resource officers (SROs), provided
240 that the MOU or interlocal agreement shall require a minimum of
241 one (1) school resource officer to be assigned each school campus
242 operating under the authority and control of the local school
243 board.

244 (2) Any person employed by a school board as a security
245 guard or school resource officer (SRO) or in any other position
246 that has the powers of a peace officer, who is not a sworn law



247 enforcement officer, must receive a minimum level of basic law
248 enforcement training, as jointly determined and prescribed by the
249 Board on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Training and the
250 State Board of Education, within two (2) years of the person's
251 initial employment in such position. * * * The failure of any
252 person employed in such position to receive the required training
253 within the designated time * * * will result in the withdrawal of
254 that person's * * * authority to exercise the powers of a peace
255 officer in or on the property of the school district.

256 (3) The school board is authorized and empowered, in its
257 discretion, and subject to the approval of the Federal
258 Communications Commission, to install and operate a noncommercial
259 radio broadcasting and transmission station for educational and
260 vocational educational purposes.

261 (4) If a law enforcement officer is duly appointed to be a
262 peace officer by a school district under this section, the local
263 school board may enter into an interlocal agreement with other law
264 enforcement entities for the provision of equipment or traffic
265 control duties, however, the duty to enforce traffic regulations
266 and to enforce the laws of the state or municipality off of school
267 property lies with the local police or sheriff's department which
268 cannot withhold its services solely because of the lack of such an
269 agreement.

270 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
271 and after July 1, 2023.

