

By: Representative Crawford

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 797

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO INSTALL VIDEO  
 2 SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS EQUIPPED WITH AUDIO RECEPTION TECHNOLOGY IN  
 3 CERTAIN AREAS OF SCHOOLS FOR THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF  
 4 EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS; TO LIMIT VIEWING ACCESS OF RECORDED  
 5 SURVEILLANCE TO CERTAIN DISTRICT AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL-FACILITY  
 6 LICENSED PERSONNEL; TO REQUIRE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO PROTECT THE  
 7 PRIVACY AND IDENTITY OF STUDENTS CAPTURED IN THE SURVEILLANCE WHO  
 8 ARE NOT THE SUBJECT OF INCIDENTS GIVING RISE TO AN INVESTIGATION  
 9 OR LITIGATION; TO AUTHORIZE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO CONTRACT WITH  
 10 ANY COMPANY OR INDIVIDUAL, INDEPENDENT OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO  
 11 PROVIDE SURVEILLANCE MONITORING; TO REQUIRE THE SCHOOL DISTRICT,  
 12 ACTING THROUGH THE LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD, TO EMPLOY CERTAIN  
 13 PROCEDURES PRIOR TO AWARDING THE CONTRACT FOR MONITORING SERVICES;  
 14 TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO EMPLOY SECURITY  
 15 PERSONNEL OR REQUIRE THE IMMEDIATE PRESENCE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT  
 16 OFFICERS ON SCHOOL PREMISES EQUIPPED WITH SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS; TO  
 17 BRING FORWARD SECTION 37-3-83, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH  
 18 ESTABLISHES A SCHOOL SAFETY GRANT PROGRAM, FOR PURPOSES OF  
 19 POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

21 **SECTION 1.** (1) Each school district shall install video  
 22 surveillance cameras equipped with audio reception technology into  
 23 each self-contained classroom of school facilities which provides  
 24 daily instruction to an exceptional child, as defined in Section  
 25 37-23-3, as well as in the gymnasium, interior corridors,  
 26 cafeteria, designated recreational activity areas and on the



27 exterior parameters of the school facility. Each point of access  
28 that allows for the entry and exit of individuals also must be  
29 under video surveillance.

30 (2) The surveillance footage and audio may be viewed only by  
31 the district superintendent and by the principal and licensed  
32 personnel in the school building where the equipment is installed.  
33 In the event of an incident involving an exceptional child which  
34 warrants the disclosure of the video surveillance for  
35 investigation or litigation purposes, the district shall undertake  
36 every measure to protect the privacy and identity of any student  
37 not involved in the incident giving rise to the investigation or  
38 litigation for which the surveillance is being sought.

39 (3) The school district may contract with any company or  
40 individual, independent of the school district, to provide the  
41 necessary surveillance monitoring service. However, the school  
42 district, acting through the school board, may not select any one  
43 (1) company or individual without first advertising a request for  
44 proposals in a newspaper published in the county in which the  
45 school district is located or, if no newspaper is published in  
46 that county, then in a newspaper having a general circulation in  
47 that county, for two (2) successive weeks, the first being at  
48 least ten (10) days before the public contract. The contract must  
49 then be awarded to the best bid received and accepted by the  
50 board.



51 (4) With the installation of surveillance cameras on school  
52 premises as required under subsection (1) of this section, it is  
53 not necessary for the school district to employ security personnel  
54 or require the immediate presence of law enforcement officers on a  
55 daily basis.

56 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-3-83, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
57 brought forward as follows:

58 37-3-83. (1) There is established within the State  
59 Department of Education, using only existing staff and resources,  
60 a School Safety Grant Program, available to all eligible public  
61 school districts, to assist in financing programs to provide  
62 school safety. However, no monies from the Temporary Assistance  
63 for Needy Families grant may be used for the School Safety Grant  
64 Program.

65 (2) The school board of each school district, with the  
66 assistance of the State Department of Education School Safety  
67 Center, shall adopt a comprehensive local school district school  
68 safety plan and shall update the plan on an annual basis.

69 (3) Subject to the extent of appropriations available, the  
70 School Safety Grant Program shall offer any of the following  
71 specific preventive services, and other additional services  
72 appropriate to the most current school district school safety  
73 plan:

74 (a) Metal detectors;



75           (b) Video surveillance cameras, communications  
76 equipment and monitoring equipment for classrooms, school  
77 buildings, school grounds and school buses;  
78           (c) Crisis management/action teams responding to school  
79 violence;  
80           (d) Violence prevention training, conflict resolution  
81 training, behavioral stress training and other appropriate  
82 training designated by the State Department of Education for  
83 faculty and staff; and  
84           (e) School safety personnel.

85           (4) Each local school district of this state may annually  
86 apply for school safety grant funds subject to appropriations by  
87 the Legislature. School safety grants shall include a base grant  
88 amount plus an additional amount per student in average daily  
89 attendance in the school or school district. The base grant  
90 amount and amount per student shall be determined by the State  
91 Board of Education, subject to specific appropriation therefor by  
92 the Legislature. In order to be eligible for such program, each  
93 local school board desiring to participate shall apply to the  
94 State Department of Education by May 31 before the beginning of  
95 the applicable fiscal year on forms provided by the department,  
96 and shall be required to establish a local School Safety Task  
97 Force to involve members of the community in the school safety  
98 effort. The State Department of Education shall determine by July



99 1 of each succeeding year which local school districts have  
100 submitted approved applications for school safety grants.

101 (5) As part of the School Safety Grant Program, the State  
102 Department of Education may conduct a pilot program to research  
103 the feasibility of using video camera equipment in the classroom  
104 to address the following:

105 (a) Determine if video cameras in the classroom reduce  
106 student disciplinary problems;

107 (b) Enable teachers to present clear and convincing  
108 evidence of a student's disruptive behavior to the student, the  
109 principal, the superintendent and the student's parents; and

110 (c) Enable teachers to review teaching performance and  
111 receive diagnostic feedback for developmental purposes.

112 (6) Any local school district may use  
113 audio/visual-monitoring equipment in classrooms, hallways,  
114 buildings, grounds and buses for the purpose of monitoring school  
115 disciplinary problems.

116 (7) As a component of the comprehensive local school  
117 district school safety plan required under subsection (2) of this  
118 section, the school board of a school district may adopt and  
119 implement a policy addressing sexual abuse of children, to be  
120 known as "Erin's Law Awareness." Any policy adopted under this  
121 subsection may include or address, but need not be limited to, the  
122 following:



123 (a) Methods for increasing teacher, student and  
124 parental awareness of issues regarding sexual abuse of children,  
125 including knowledge of likely warning signs indicating that a  
126 child may be a victim of sexual abuse;

127 (b) Educational information for parents or guardians,  
128 which may be included in the school handbook, on the warning signs  
129 of a child being abused, along with any needed assistance,  
130 referral or resource information;

131 (c) Training for school personnel on child sexual  
132 abuse;

133 (d) Age-appropriate curriculum for students in  
134 prekindergarten through fifth grade;

135 (e) Actions that a child who is a victim of sexual  
136 abuse should take to obtain assistance and intervention;

137 (f) Counseling and resources available for students  
138 affected by sexual abuse; and

139 (g) Emotional and educational support for a child who  
140 has been abused to enable the child to be successful in school.

141 (8) As part of the school safety grant program, the State  
142 Department of Education shall establish three (3) pilot programs  
143 in six (6) school districts utilizing an evidence-based curriculum  
144 to provide students in Grades K-5 with skills to manage stress and  
145 anxiety in order for them to be better equipped to handle  
146 challenges in a healthy way and build resiliency. The Mississippi  
147 Department of Mental Health shall be responsible for the selection



148 of the content of the evidence-based curriculum. The results of  
149 this pilot program shall be measured and reported, and such  
150 results shall be used in consideration of the implementation of  
151 this curriculum statewide.

152 (9) As a component of the comprehensive local school  
153 district safety plan required under subsection (2) of this  
154 section, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year, the State  
155 Department of Education shall require local school districts to  
156 conduct, every two (2) years, refresher training on mental health  
157 and suicide prevention for all school employees and personnel,  
158 including all cafeteria workers, custodians, teachers and  
159 administrators. The Mississippi Department of Mental Health shall  
160 be responsible for the development and/or selection of the content  
161 of the training, which training shall be provided at no cost to  
162 school employees. School districts shall report completion of the  
163 training to the State Department of Education.

164 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
165 and after July 1, 2024.

