

By: Representative Scott (80th)

To: Juvenile Justice;  
Appropriations

## HOUSE BILL NO. 1457

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE POSITION OF SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER  
2 UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES AS A FIVE-YEAR PILOT  
3 PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE PROGRAM TO BE IMPLEMENTED IN SCHOOL  
4 DISTRICTS CHARACTERIZED BY POOR STUDENT PERFORMANCE, HIGH CRIME  
5 RATES OR DELINQUENT ACTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN  
6 SERVICES SHALL ESTABLISH THE MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS AND SALARY FOR  
7 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS; TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS TO  
8 USE SCHOOL FACILITIES IN THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES; TO  
9 PROVIDE THAT EACH SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER SHALL IMPLEMENT A  
10 MENTORING PROGRAM IN ORDER TO PROVIDE STUDENTS WITH POSITIVE ROLE  
11 MODELS FROM THE LOCAL COMMUNITY; TO REQUIRE EACH SCHOOL RESOURCE  
12 OFFICER TO ESTABLISH A YOUTH CRIME WATCH PROGRAM TO HELP YOUTH IN  
13 THE PREVENTION OF VIOLENCE, DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE AND GANG ACTIVITY  
14 AND SMOKING CESSATION; TO DESCRIBE THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS  
15 OF THE YOUTH CRIME WATCH PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
16 IMPLEMENTATION BY THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER OF A CONFLICT  
17 RESOLUTION PROGRAM TO TEACH CHILDREN TO PEACEFULLY RESOLVE  
18 CONFLICTS AND TO EFFECTIVELY DEAL WITH ANGER; TO PROVIDE FOR THE  
19 IMPLEMENTATION OF A MENTORING GROUP FOR STUDENTS BETWEEN THE AGES  
20 OF TEN AND FOURTEEN WITH ACADEMIC OR BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS; TO  
21 REQUIRE STUDENTS IN THE PROGRAM TO PARTICIPATE IN SCHOOL AND  
22 COMMUNITY PROJECTS AND A PERFORMANCE GROUP; TO REQUIRE THE  
23 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO EVALUATE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE  
24 SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2007, AND TO RECOMMEND  
25 TO THE LEGISLATURE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POSITION IN ALL  
26 SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR ITS DISCONTINUATION; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

28 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created as a pilot program within  
29 the Department of Human Services the position of school resource  
30 officer. The school resource officer shall be responsible for the  
31 administration of various interdiction programs and the  
32 coordination of local collaborative efforts for at-risk children  
33 in the school district to which the school resource officer is  
34 assigned by the department.

35 (2) The Department of Human Services shall implement the  
36 position of school resource officer as a pilot program in selected  
37 school districts in the state. Every school district that has  
38 been placed on probation for failure to meet accreditation  
39 standards since July 1, 1999, must be included in the program.



40 The department shall designate the remainder of the districts for  
41 participation in the pilot program by identifying those districts  
42 most characterized by poor student performance, high incidents of  
43 crime or delinquent acts. The pilot program shall exist until  
44 July 1, 2007, at which time, based upon the recommendations of the  
45 department, the position must be permanently established in all  
46 school districts or discontinued.

47 (3) The Department of Human Services shall establish the  
48 minimum qualifications and annual salary for the position of  
49 school resource officer. The school resource officer shall  
50 maintain an office in the school district to which the officer is  
51 assigned by the department. The department may authorize the  
52 employment of any clerical or support personnel that may be  
53 necessary for the administration of the office of the school  
54 resource officer.

55 (4) The school resource officer may use school buildings and  
56 grounds within the school district for the holding of meetings and  
57 gatherings of people in the performance of his duties.

58 **SECTION 2.** In order to provide students with an opportunity  
59 to have direct personal contact with positive role models from  
60 within the local community, the school resource officer shall  
61 develop and implement a mentoring program that demonstrates the  
62 accomplishments of local citizens. The mentoring program shall  
63 coordinate the activities of school personnel, members of the  
64 business community, civic leaders, law enforcement, churches and  
65 other organizations to present various programs to student groups  
66 and tutorial and guidance services to individual students.

67 **SECTION 3.** (1) Each school resource officer shall be  
68 responsible for establishing a Youth Crime Watch Program in the  
69 school district to which the officer is assigned to help youth in  
70 the prevention of crime and violence, alcohol and drug use and  
71 gang activity and smoking cessation. The Youth Crime Watch  
72 Program must be a school-based, peer group organization comprised



73 and under the leadership of students. Through the program,  
74 students shall promote student responsibility for a safe school  
75 environment through formal and informal peer groups. In addition,  
76 the program shall focus on the consequences of youth crime and  
77 what students can do to prevent it. The school resource officer  
78 shall provide guidance to the students in the formation of the  
79 program and must be available, upon the request of the students,  
80 to assist with the various activities conducted through the  
81 program.

82 (2) In the Youth Crime Watch Program, a core group  
83 consisting of an advisor, Youth Crime Watch representative,  
84 students selected by the principal or staff and other program  
85 participants must be formed at each school. The core group  
86 members shall serve as representatives of the program to all  
87 students, who must be encouraged to participate in the program.  
88 Activities and responsibilities of the group must include defining  
89 the school's needs and problems, promoting school spirit,  
90 developing action plans and helping sponsor activities for  
91 reducing campus crime, publicizing program successes and  
92 increasing student involvement. The school resource officer shall  
93 encourage the involvement of local businesses and law enforcement  
94 officials to secure materials and guest speakers to further the  
95 work of the Youth Crime Watch Program.

96 **SECTION 4.** The school resource officer shall develop and  
97 implement in all schools in the district a formal conflict  
98 resolution program designed to teach children to peacefully  
99 resolve conflicts and to effectively deal with their anger. As  
100 part of the program, students must be taught how to resolve  
101 disagreements nonviolently by working together to arrive at  
102 mutually acceptable solutions. Students, teachers or parent  
103 volunteers also may be trained to settle disputes among students.  
104 In addition to offering conflict resolution skills, the program  
105 shall seek to develop leadership and coping skills in students.



106 The program must be a part of the curriculum of students at each  
107 grade level.

108        **SECTION 5.** (1) The school resource officer shall establish  
109 in each middle or junior high school in the district a school  
110 mentoring group for students between the ages of ten (10) and  
111 fourteen (14) with academic or behavioral problems. Through this  
112 program, participants must have the opportunity to do homework for  
113 several hours after school and to take part in group sessions  
114 where the students have a safe outlet to discuss with their peers,  
115 problems involving various aspects of their lives, including the  
116 school or community, drug and alcohol use, child abuse, coping  
117 with parental and other adult authorities, finances, gang  
118 activity, emotional crises, peer pressure and health and legal  
119 issues. Students must be trained to develop solutions to their  
120 problems, including weighing what the consequences of different  
121 actions in response to a particular problem might be.

122        (2) The mentoring program shall require students to  
123 participate in school and community service projects. Through  
124 these projects, students shall perform beneficial services for  
125 their school or community through activities such as preparing  
126 props for a school play or doing chores for the elderly. The  
127 goals of the school and community service projects are to:

128           (a) Promote self-esteem, citizenship and other positive  
129 qualities in participants;

130           (b) Enhance students' sense of empowerment as they make  
131 a contribution to the community;

132           (c) Help students develop problem-solving, social and  
133 employment skills;

134           (d) Foster interaction among students; and

135           (e) Provide students with opportunities to give help  
136 and to receive help from their peers.

137        (3) Participants in the mentoring program also must be  
138 required to participate in a performance group. The performance



139 groups shall encourage students to recognize and develop their  
140 talents and to enhance skills in self-discipline.

141 **SECTION 6.** Before January 1, 2007, the Department of Human  
142 Services shall evaluate those school districts that have  
143 participated in the pilot program to determine the effectiveness  
144 of the school resource officer. The evaluation must consider the  
145 following factors:

146 (a) The improvement in academic performance of students  
147 in the district;

148 (b) The degree to which youth crime and school violence  
149 has decreased;

150 (c) The participation rate of students in the various  
151 programs implemented and administered by the school resource  
152 officer; and

153 (d) The opinions of school administrators, teachers,  
154 parents and students in regard to the various programs implemented  
155 and administered by the school resource officer.

156 The Department of Human Services shall prepare a report based  
157 upon its evaluation of the pilot program. The report must contain  
158 a recommendation by the department to the Legislature that the  
159 program be permanently implemented in all school districts or  
160 discontinued.

161 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
162 and after July 1, 2002.

