MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representative Lamar

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 515

AN ACT TO CREATE THE COUNCIL ON THE PREVENTION OF SCHOOL SHOOTINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING A MONITORING CENTER WITHIN THE OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO CONDUCT 24-HOUR-A-DAY SURVEILLANCE OF ONLINE STUDENT ACTIVITY TO IDENTIFY POSSIBLE PLANNING OF A SCHOOL SHOOTING; TO PRESCRIBE THE COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS DUTIES; TO REQUIRE THE ATTORNEY GENERAL TO SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE BEFORE THE 2022 REGULAR SESSION ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL ALONG WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON LEGISLATION AND FUNDING NECESSARY FOR THE OPERATION OF THE CENTER; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) There is created the Council on the Prevention of School Shootings for the purpose of establishing a coordinated system of statewide monitoring from a central location of the online work and activity of students for suspicious or harmful content that represents signs of planning for a school shooting. The council will be connected with and staffed by the Office of the Attorney General.

(2) The council will be comprised of the following officials and persons having knowledge and expertise in their respective fields:

(a) The Attorney General;

(b) The State Superintendent of Public Education;

(c) The Commissioner of Public Safety;

(d) The Director of the Mississippi Bureau of Investigation;

(e) The Director of the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security;

(f) An analyst employed by the Mississippi Analysis and Information Center (MSAIC Fusion Center) within the Mississippi Office of Homeland Security;

(g) The Executive Director of the Department of Mental Health;

(h) The Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services (MDITS);

(i) A representative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation;

(j) A representative of the United States Secret Service;

(k) A sheriff selected by the Mississippi Sheriff's Association;

(l) A police chief selected by the Mississippi Association of Chiefs of Police;

(m) A school district superintendent selected by the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents;

(n) A school resource officer selected by the Mississippi Association of School Resource Officers; and

(o) Any other person or persons possessing expertise or experience relating to school violence or mass shootings selected by the Attorney General.

If a member of the council is unable to attend a scheduled meeting, the member may appoint an employee of the member's agency who is familiar with the work of the council to attend that meeting in the member's stead.

(3) Before September 1, 2021, the Attorney General shall convene a meeting of the council. The members of the council shall collaborate to develop a center in the Office of the Attorney General for twenty-four-hour-a-day real-time content analysis using a combination of in-house artificial intelligence with human content monitors to detect online activities of minors who are at risk of committing extreme violence on others. Specifically, the council shall consider the following:

(a) Recognition of those common traits that national research has identified in school shooters, including mental illness, broken homes, economic insecurity and increasingly violent and dysfunctional behavior, and the identification of those characteristics through a student's online activity;

(b) Identification of official school online platforms used by students, including written school assignments submitted to teachers electronically, Internet searches, social media activity, online communications systems and other computer

technology such as email, chats and image uploads, and private Internet usage which lawfully may be monitored;

(c) Necessary safeguards to assure that monitoring of students' online activity complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and any other applicable federal or state privacy laws;

(d) Policies on the reporting of content revealing suspicious or harmful signs of a student's observable planning of an attack, including researching weapons, documentation of plans and attempts to recruit others, as well as content that, while not raising concerns of an imminent school shooting, indicates the presence of a mental health disorder in a student that if not addressed, may rise to a serious threat to the safety of other students;

(e) Existing resources and online monitoring currently being conducted to identify Internet content that represents a threat to the safety of others in order to minimize duplication of surveillance activity to the extent possible;

(f) Existing resources in the Office of the Attorney General that immediately may be utilized to implement the online surveillance of student activity; and

(g) Identification of equipment, intelligence and human resources necessary for the implementation and operation of the monitoring center in the Office of the Attorney General.

(4) Members of the council shall serve without compensation; however, members are entitled to all actual and necessary expenses incurred in the discharge of the council's duties, including mileage as authorized by law, which are not funded by the member's employer. All expenses incurred by and on behalf of the council may be paid from any funds made available for such purposes.

(5) Before January 1, 2022, the Attorney General shall submit a report to the Legislature on the work of the Council on the Prevention of School Shootings. The report must include suggested legislation and funding requirements necessary to fully establish, equip and staff a twenty-four-hour-a-day center for online student surveillance consistent with the council's recommendations.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.