

Senate Bill 2980  
Press Conference/Bill Signing  
Monday, March 26, 2001  
10:30 a.m.

- Time and time again I have said Education must be our number one priority in Mississippi.
- Signing Senate Bill 2980 reinforces that statement.
- Senate Bill 2980 revises the education requirements for the qualification of a conservation officer with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and emphasizes the importance of the role education plays in the responsibilities of a conservation officer.
- Senate Bill 2980 now requires conservation officers to have successfully completed sixty-four semester hours at an accredited community college or university or have an associate degree from an accredited community college or have passed the Law Enforcement Academy and have at least five years of experience in law enforcement.

- The Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks has fully supported this legislation, and I would like to ask Sam Polles, Executive Director of the agency to say a few words.
- (Sam speaks)
- I would also like to recognize Dr. Olon Ray, Executive Director of the state board for community and junior colleges to say a few words.
- (Olon speaks)
- Mississippi's conservation officers have extremely responsible roles of preserving and protecting our natural resources in Mississippi, and should have an education that supports their career.
- I fully support this legislation, and I would like to commend Senator Posey, author of Senate Bill 2980 and the members of the House and Senate for sending this bill to my desk.
- It is my pleasure to sign Senate Bill 2980.

- (Sign bill and 2 ceremonial bills – hand ceremonial bills to Sam and Olon.)
- We know our children need a good, quality education to be successful in their careers and in their lives, and it is important that we have educated, qualified people working throughout our state.
- Education is the cornerstone on which our children build their careers - their lives – their futures.
- We will be glad to take any questions you may have.