

By: Representative Blackmon

To: Juvenile Justice;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 115

1 AN ACT TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM UNDER THE
2 JOINT DIRECTION OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND THE
3 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO ASSIST YOUTH WHO ARE AT RISK; TO
4 PROVIDE FOR THE TEACHING OF BASIC EDUCATION FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS; TO
5 SPECIFY THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE FOR
6 THE CONDUCTING OF COMPONENT EVALUATIONS; TO SPECIFY BASIC AREAS OF
7 LEARNING TO BE ADDRESSED BY THE PROGRAM; TO AUTHORIZE THE
8 ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to
11 successfully provide an alternative educational and training
12 program for juveniles who are habitual truants, drop-outs,
13 expelled for criminal acts, and behavior problems in the public
14 and private schools and home and community environment. It is the
15 further intent of the Legislature to provide support to youth with
16 the greatest socioeconomic challenges.

17 SECTION 2. In addition to any other programs or other
18 services or requirements provided by law, there is created an
19 alternative educational and training program to be under the joint
20 direction of the State Department of Education and the Department
21 of Human Services to provide youth a new way of life and help
22 build up self-esteem and encourage a positive outlook on life.
23 All of the youth coming through this program will leave with the
24 three (3) basic fundamental skills (reading, writing and counting)
25 at a standardized level. The program shall provide assistance to
26 youth in order to:

27 (a) Prevent crime;

28 (b) Save lives;

29 (c) Give youth a second chance to make a difference in

30 their lives;

31 (d) Give hope to the state in solving the crime
32 problems in the state; and

33 (e) Save the state millions of dollars and produce
34 productive taxpaying citizens.

35 SECTION 3. (1) The overall goal of the program is to
36 provide at-risk youth with structured opportunities in which to
37 develop the awareness and skills necessary for actualization of
38 personal potential and educational success. This goal is
39 supported by six (6) subgoals which incorporate the desired
40 outcome of project activities. The project's subgoals are:

41 (a) To provide youth with a multifaceted educational
42 support structure which will elevate motivational levels and
43 improve academic skills;

44 (b) To demonstrate to youth the parallels between
45 success in school and success in life outside of school;

46 (c) To foster the self-esteem and confidence levels of
47 at-risk youth by assisting them to define their individual skills
48 and talents and providing them with role models that reflect the
49 attitudes of self respect, discipline and responsibility that lead
50 to personal success;

51 (d) To provide youth with opportunities to interact
52 with positive adult role models who will provide guidance and
53 direction which will, in turn, empower youth to make informed,
54 intelligent choices in their current life situations, as well as
55 in their future endeavors;

56 (e) To expose youth to a plethora of educational and
57 positive life options and to enlighten them as to how to access
58 these options; and

59 (f) To provide opportunities for individuals,
60 organizations, corporations and other groups within the community
61 to help youth succeed in school, as well as to enrich their own
62 lives by becoming better citizens of the state, city and local

63 community.

64 (2) The success of these goals will be achieved through the
65 implementation of eight (8) objectives:

66 (a) To turn Battlefield Park into an alternative school
67 with the capacity to house two hundred (200) youth Grades 6-12;

68 (b) To provide a second chance for one hundred (100)
69 females and one hundred (100) males who have demonstrated that
70 they cannot succeed in the public schools and provide an
71 opportunity to reside in a dorm situation away from the negative
72 environment that has kindled their behavioral condition;

73 (c) To provide educational, job readiness, entrepreneur
74 and college preparatory training components, (these components
75 will be designed to clearly teach young people the reading,
76 writing and counting skills needed for them to succeed);

77 (d) To facilitate orientations and the training for
78 youth, families and community;

79 (e) To conduct sessions in self-esteem building,
80 critical thinking skills, personal skills assessment and goal
81 setting;

82 (f) To facilitate and sponsor educational field trips
83 and outings, workshops and seminars;

84 (g) To facilitate events, activities and projects to
85 acknowledge and recognize the achievements of youth participants;
86 and

87 (h) To recruit volunteers and provide orientation
88 trainings.

89 SECTION 4. The program will conduct component evaluations
90 which will entail surveying program participants to assess the
91 effectiveness and efficiency of client services. The program will
92 be comprised of four (4) basic areas of learning skills:

93 (a) Education component:

94 (i) Reading;

95 (ii) Writing;

- 96 (iii) Math;
- 97 (iv) Recreational activities; and
- 98 (v) Graduation to the next phase.
- 99 (b) Job training skills:
- 100 (i) Challenge course designed to help youth
- 101 realize the importance of their dreams and expectations;
- 102 (ii) Workshops and seminars to develop talent and
- 103 skills;
- 104 (iii) Job interview and resume writing techniques;
- 105 and
- 106 (iv) Graduation to the next phase.
- 107 (c) Work training experience:
- 108 (i) Allowing youth to work on professional job
- 109 sites; and
- 110 (ii) Graduation to the next phase.
- 111 (d) Developed entrepreneur training project:
- 112 (i) Teaching youth to start and run their own
- 113 businesses;
- 114 (ii) Teaching management skills;
- 115 (iii) Teaching customer service skills;
- 116 (iv) Hiring and firing techniques; and
- 117 (v) Bookkeeping and accountant skills.

118 SECTION 5. The Department of Education and the Department of

119 Human Services are authorized to acquire any necessary property to

120 carry out the provisions of this act. The Legislature shall

121 appropriate any necessary funds to carry out the provisions of

122 this act.

123 SECTION 6. The provisions of this act are supplemental to

124 any other provisions of law.

125 SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from

126 and after July 1, 1999.