

By: Senator(s) Jordan (24th)

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2121

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO DEVELOP AND
2 IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE K-12 PROGRAM FOR CHARACTER EDUCATION; TO
3 PRESCRIBE THE CHARACTER TRAITS TO BE DEVELOPED BY SAID PROGRAM; TO
4 AMEND SECTION 37-13-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT
5 NO STUDENT WITH A RELIGIOUS OR CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION SHALL BE
6 REQUIRED TO SAY THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG; AND FOR
7 RELATED PURPOSES. BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE
8 OF MISSISSIPPI:

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10 SECTION 1. The local school boards of the public school
11 districts of this state are hereby authorized, in their
12 discretion, to develop and implement, at the beginning of the
13 1999-2000 school year, a comprehensive program for character
14 education in Grades K-12. This program of character education
15 shall focus on students' development of the following character
16 traits: courage, patriotism, citizenship, honesty, pride in
17 quality work, fairness, respect for and obedience to the law,
18 respect for others, kindness, cooperation, self-respect,
19 self-control, courtesy, compassion, diligence, generosity,
20 punctuality, cleanliness, cheerfulness, school pride, respect for
21 the environment, patience, creativity, sportsmanship, loyalty and
22 perseverance. Said program of character education shall include
23 the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag as required in Section
24 37-13-7, Mississippi Code of 1972. The State Board of Education
25 shall develop a model curriculum for character education and/or
26 approve an existing model curriculum, to be made available to all
27 school districts along with necessary technical assistance.

28 SECTION 2. Section 37-13-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
29 amended as follows:

30 37-13-7. (1) The boards of trustees of the public schools
31 of this state shall require the teachers under their control to
32 have all pupils repeat the oath of allegiance to the flag of the
33 United States of America at least once during each school month,
34 such oath of allegiance being as follows:

35 "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of
36 America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under
37 God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

38 (2) The official pledge of the State of Mississippi shall
39 read as follows:

40 "I salute the flag of Mississippi and the sovereign state for
41 which it stands with pride in her history and achievements and
42 with confidence in her future under the guidance of Almighty God."

43 The Pledge of Allegiance to the Mississippi flag shall be
44 taught in the public schools of this state, along with the Pledge
45 of Allegiance to the United States flag.

46 (3) No pupil with a religious or conscientious objection
47 shall be required to repeat the pledges of allegiance to the
48 United States or the Mississippi flags.

49 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from
50 and after July 1, 1999.