

By: Ishee

To: Judiciary B

HOUSE BILL NO. 55  
(As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTIONS 47-5-138 AND 47-7-3, MISSISSIPPI  
2 CODE OF 1972, TO PROVIDE THAT PERSONS CONVICTED OF NONVIOLENT  
3 CRIMES MAY PARTICIPATE IN WORK ACTIVITIES AND EDUCATIONAL  
4 ACTIVITIES APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND UPON  
5 COMPLETION OF SAME WITHOUT DISCIPLINARY PROBLEMS MAY RECEIVE A  
6 MODIFICATION OF THE SENTENCE IMPOSED AS APPROVED BY THE DEPARTMENT  
7 OF CORRECTIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 SECTION 1. Section 47-5-138, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
10 amended as follows:

11 47-5-138. (1) The department may promulgate rules and  
12 regulations to carry out an earned time allowance program based on  
13 the good conduct and performance of an inmate. An inmate is  
14 eligible to receive an earned time allowance of one-half (1/2) of  
15 the period of confinement imposed by the court except those  
16 inmates excluded by law. When an inmate is committed to the  
17 custody of the department, the department shall determine a  
18 conditional earned time release date by subtracting the earned  
19 time allowance from an inmate's term of sentence. This subsection  
20 does not apply to any sentence imposed after June 30, 1995;  
21 provided, however, from and after July 1, 2000, this subsection  
22 shall apply to sentences for any person classified as a nonviolent  
23 offender by the Department of Corrections and who participates in  
24 an approved work activity or educational activity without any  
25 disciplinary problems. Such nonviolent offender shall be eligible  
26 to have one (1) day subtracted from his total sentence for each  
27 day he participates in such approved work activity or educational  
28 activity without any disciplinary problems. "Nonviolent" shall

29 mean a person convicted of a felony other than: sex crimes,  
30 murder, robbery, manslaughter, burglary of occupied dwelling, drug  
31 offenses, rape, statutory rape and arson.

32 (2) An inmate may forfeit all or part of his earned time  
33 allowance for a serious violation of rules. No forfeiture of the  
34 earned time allowance shall be effective except upon approval of  
35 the commissioner or his designee, and forfeited earned time may  
36 not be restored.

37 (3) (a) For the purposes of this subsection, "final order"  
38 means an order of a state or federal court that dismisses a  
39 lawsuit brought by an inmate while the inmate was in the custody  
40 of the Department of Corrections as frivolous, malicious or for  
41 failure to state a claim upon which relief could be granted.

42 (b) On receipt of a final order, the department shall  
43 forfeit:

44 (i) Sixty (60) days of an inmate's accrued earned  
45 time if the department has received one (1) final order as defined  
46 herein;

47 (ii) One hundred twenty (120) days of an inmate's  
48 accrued earned time if the department has received two (2) final  
49 orders as defined herein;

50 (iii) One hundred eighty (180) days of an inmate's  
51 accrued earned time if the department has received three (3) or  
52 more final orders as defined herein.

53 (c) The department may not restore earned time  
54 forfeited under this subsection.

55 (4) An inmate who meets the good conduct and performance  
56 requirements of the earned time allowance program may be released  
57 on his conditional earned time release date.

58 (5) For any sentence imposed after June 30, 1995, an inmate  
59 may receive an earned time allowance of four and one-half (4-1/2)  
60 days for each thirty (30) days served if the department determines  
61 that the inmate has complied with the good conduct and performance  
62 requirements of the earned time allowance program. The earned  
63 time allowance under this subsection shall not exceed fifteen  
64 percent (15%) of an inmate's term of sentence, unless the inmate  
65 is classified as a nonviolent offender as provided in subsection

66 (1) of this section.

67 (6) Any inmate, who is released before the expiration of his  
68 term of sentence under this section, shall be placed under  
69 earned-release supervision until the expiration of the term of  
70 sentence. The inmate shall retain inmate status and remain under  
71 the jurisdiction of the department. The period of earned-release  
72 supervision shall be conducted in the same manner as a period of  
73 supervised parole. The department shall develop rules, terms and  
74 conditions for the earned-release supervision program. The  
75 commissioner shall designate the appropriate classification  
76 committee or other division within the department to conduct  
77 revocation hearings for inmates violating the conditions of  
78 earned-release supervision.

79 (7) If the earned-release supervision is revoked, the inmate  
80 shall serve the remainder of the sentence and the time the inmate  
81 was on earned-release supervision, shall not be applied to and  
82 shall not reduce his sentence.

83 SECTION 2. Section 47-7-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
84 amended as follows:

85 47-7-3. (1) Every prisoner who has been convicted of any  
86 offense against the State of Mississippi, and is confined in the  
87 execution of a judgment of such conviction in the Mississippi  
88 State Penitentiary for a definite term or terms of one (1) year or  
89 over, or for the term of his or her natural life, whose record of  
90 conduct shows that such prisoner has observed the rules of the  
91 penitentiary, and who has served not less than one-fourth (1/4) of  
92 the total of such term or terms for which such prisoner was  
93 sentenced, or, if sentenced to serve a term or terms of thirty  
94 (30) years or more, or, if sentenced for the term of the natural  
95 life of such prisoner, has served not less than ten (10) years of  
96 such life sentence, may be released on parole as hereinafter  
97 provided, except that:

98 (a) No prisoner convicted as a confirmed and habitual

99 criminal under the provisions of Sections 99-19-81 through  
100 99-19-87 shall be eligible for parole;

101 (b) Any person who shall have been convicted of a sex  
102 crime shall not be released on parole except for a person under  
103 the age of nineteen (19) who has been convicted under Section  
104 97-3-67;

105 (c) No one shall be eligible for parole until he shall  
106 have served one (1) year of his sentence, unless such person has  
107 accrued any meritorious earned time allowances, in which case he  
108 shall be eligible for parole if he has served (i) nine (9) months  
109 of his sentence or sentences, when his sentence or sentences is  
110 two (2) years or less; (ii) ten (10) months of his sentence or  
111 sentences when his sentence or sentences is more than two (2)  
112 years but no more than five (5) years; and (iii) one (1) year of  
113 his sentence or sentences when his sentence or sentences is more  
114 than five (5) years;

115 (d) (i) No person shall be eligible for parole who  
116 shall, on or after January 1, 1977, be convicted of robbery or  
117 attempted robbery through the display of a firearm until he shall  
118 have served ten (10) years if sentenced to a term or terms of more  
119 than ten (10) years or if sentenced for the term of the natural  
120 life of such person. If such person is sentenced to a term or  
121 terms of ten (10) years or less, then such person shall not be  
122 eligible for parole. The provisions of this paragraph (d) shall  
123 also apply to any person who shall commit robbery or attempted  
124 robbery on or after July 1, 1982, through the display of a deadly  
125 weapon. This subparagraph (d)(i) shall not apply to persons  
126 convicted after September 30, 1994;

127 (ii) No person shall be eligible for parole who  
128 shall, on or after October 1, 1994, be convicted of robbery,  
129 attempted robbery or carjacking as provided in Section 97-3-115 et  
130 seq., through the display of a firearm or drive-by shooting as  
131 provided in Section 97-3-109. The provisions of this subparagraph

132 (d)(ii) shall also apply to any person who shall commit robbery,  
133 attempted robbery, carjacking or a drive-by shooting on or after  
134 October 1, 1994, through the display of a deadly weapon;

135 (e) No person shall be eligible for parole who, on or  
136 after July 1, 1994, is charged, tried, convicted and sentenced to  
137 life imprisonment without eligibility for parole under the  
138 provisions of Section 99-19-101;

139 (f) No person shall be eligible for parole who is  
140 charged, tried, convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment under  
141 the provisions of Section 99-19-101;

142 (g) No person shall be eligible for parole who is  
143 convicted or whose suspended sentence is revoked after June 30,  
144 1995; provided, however, persons convicted of a nonviolent crime  
145 as provided in Section 47-5-138 shall be eligible for parole;

146 (h) An offender may be eligible for medical release  
147 under Section 47-7-4.

148 (2) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, an inmate  
149 shall not be eligible to receive earned time, good time or any  
150 other administrative reduction of time which shall reduce the time  
151 necessary to be served for parole eligibility as provided in  
152 subsection (1) of this section; however, this subsection shall not  
153 apply to the advancement of parole eligibility dates pursuant to  
154 the Prison Overcrowding Emergency Powers Act. Moreover,  
155 meritorious earned time allowances may be used to reduce the time  
156 necessary to be served for parole eligibility as provided in  
157 paragraph (c) of subsection (1) of this section.

158 (3) The State Parole Board shall by rules and regulations  
159 establish a method of determining a tentative parole hearing date  
160 for each eligible offender taken into the custody of the  
161 Department of Corrections. The tentative parole hearing date  
162 shall be determined within ninety (90) days after the department  
163 has assumed custody of the offender. Such tentative parole  
164 hearing date shall be calculated by a formula taking into account

165 the offender's age upon first commitment, number of prior  
166 incarcerations, prior probation or parole failures, the severity  
167 and the violence of the offense committed, employment history and  
168 other criteria which in the opinion of the board tend to validly  
169 and reliably predict the length of incarceration necessary before  
170 the offender can be successfully paroled.

171 (4) Any inmate within twenty-four (24) months of his parole  
172 eligibility date and who meets the criteria established by the  
173 classification committee shall receive priority for placement in  
174 any educational development and job training programs. Any inmate  
175 refusing to participate in an educational development or job  
176 training program may be ineligible for parole.

177 SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
178 and after July 1, 2000.