HOUSE BILL NO. 51
(As Sent to Governor)

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE A BRIEF PERIOD OF QUIET REFLECTION IN PUBLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOMS; TO AMEND SECTION 37-13-163, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO AUTHORIZE AND DIRECT PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS IN PUBLIC ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO DISPLAY THE MOTTO OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN EACH CLASSROOM, SCHOOL AUDITORIUM AND CAFETERIA; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) In each public school classroom, the local school governing board may authorize a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than sixty (60) seconds at the opening of school upon every school day.

(2) The moment of quiet reflection authorized by subsection (1) of this section is not intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise but is considered an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection.

SECTION 2. Section 37-13-163, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-13-163. (1) Any teacher, administrator, school council or local school board in any public school district in this state may post in a public school building, classroom or at any school event or read from any historical document or writing relating to the founding of the United States of America or this state, or both, notwithstanding the fact that such materials may include religious quotations, references or illustrations. There shall be no content-based censorship of American or Mississippi History, heritage or culture based on any religious references contained in such documents, writings or records.
(2) Principals and teachers in each public elementary and secondary school of each school district in this state shall display on an appropriately framed background with minimum dimensions of eleven (11) inches by fourteen (14) inches, the following motto of the United States of America in each classroom, school auditorium and school cafeteria under his or her supervision: "IN GOD WE TRUST." For purposes of this provision, "classroom" shall mean any room of a public school where instruction takes place.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2001.