

By: Representative Flaggs

To: Juvenile Justice;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1109

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE AMER-I-CAN PILOT PROGRAM WITHIN THE  
2 DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES; TO SET  
3 FORTH THE PURPOSES OF THE PILOT PROGRAM AND TO REQUIRE THE  
4 DIVISION TO SUBMIT A REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAM TO  
5 CERTAIN LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 SECTION 1. (1) The Department of Human Services, Division  
8 of Youth Services, shall establish a pilot program to be known as  
9 the "Amer-I-Can Program." The program is designed for youths who  
10 have been committed to or are confined in Columbia or Oakley  
11 Training Schools. The objectives of this program are:

12 (a) To develop greater self-esteem, assume responsible  
13 attitudes and experience a restructuring of habits and  
14 conditioning processes;

15 (b) To develop an appreciation of family members and an  
16 understanding of the role family structure has in achieving  
17 successful living;

18 (c) To develop an understanding of the concept of  
19 community and collective responsibility;

20 (d) To develop a prowess in problem solving and  
21 decision making that will eliminate many of the difficulties that  
22 were encountered in past experiences;

23 (e) To develop skills in money management and financial  
24 stability, thus relieving pressures that have contributed to  
25 previous difficulties;

26 (f) To develop communication skills to better express  
27 thoughts and ideas while acquiring an understanding of and respect  
28 for the thoughts and ideas of others; and

29           (g) To acquire employment seeking and retention skills  
30 to improve chances of long term, gainful employment.

31           (2) The Division of Youth Services shall develop policies  
32 and procedures to administer the program and shall choose which  
33 youths are eligible to participate in the program.

34           (3) The Department of Human Services shall use Temporary  
35 Assistance For Needy Families (TANF) funds to implement this  
36 program. In addition, the department may accept any funds, public  
37 or private, made available to it for the program.

38           (4) Before December 1, 2002, the Division of Youth Services  
39 shall prepare a report on the effectiveness of the pilot program  
40 to be submitted to the chairmen of the Juvenile Justice Committees  
41 of the House of Representatives and Senate. The report shall  
42 include information concerning the number of youths ordered to  
43 participate in the program and the rate of recidivism of youths  
44 successfully completing the program. The department shall address  
45 whether or not the Amer-I-Can Program should become a permanent  
46 program and whether or not it should be considered as an  
47 alternative program in each school district.

48           SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
49 and after July 1, 2001.