

By: Representative Flaggs

To: Juvenile Justice;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1109
(As Sent to Governor)

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 may accept any funds, public or private,
35 made available to it for the program.

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

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