

By: Representative Flaggs

To: Juvenile Justice;  
Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1493

1 AN ACT TO DIRECT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO  
2 ESTABLISH A PROGRAM OF STUDENT ASSISTANCE AND PEER COUNSELING THAT  
3 WILL BE USED IN ALL PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE STATE AS AN  
4 ALTERNATIVE TO THE DETENTION OR SUSPENSION OF STUDENTS; TO  
5 PRESCRIBE THE MINIMUM COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED  
6 PURPOSES.

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

8 SECTION 1. The State Department of Education shall establish  
9 a program of student assistance and peer counseling that will be  
10 used in all public high schools in the state as an alternative to  
11 the detention or suspension of students. The department shall  
12 determine and prescribe the components of the program, which will  
13 include the following, at a minimum:

14 (a) The program will be conducted in a room at the  
15 school that is a restricted environment. The principal of the  
16 school is the only person who may admit students to the program,  
17 and the principal also will determine how long a student will stay  
18 in the program.

19 (b) Students in the program will receive assignments  
20 from teachers, will be provided with one-on-one help with regular  
21 schoolwork, and will receive a folder of learning activities to  
22 help develop the skills necessary to cope with everyday behavior.

23 (c) Students will receive counseling from peer  
24 counselors on a daily basis, in order to modify behavior and  
25 develop the skills necessary to cope with everyday behavior. Peer  
26 counselors also will tutor students with learning problems. Peer  
27 counselors must be students who are juniors or seniors, make good  
28 grades, work well with their peers, are not judgmental, have high

29 tolerance for people in trouble, are drug and alcohol free, and  
30 set a positive example for living. Peer counselors will be  
31 trained in listening skills, conflict resolution, and dealing with  
32 current personal and family problems.

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