

By: Senator(s) Chaney, Burton, Kirby,  
Michel, Jackson, Jordan, Tollison, Nunnelee,  
Carmichael

To: Education

## SENATE BILL NO. 2578

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-16-11, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO AUTHORIZE THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP AND ISSUE  
3 CRITERIA FOR AN OCCUPATIONAL DIPLOMA FOR STUDENTS WITH  
4 DISABILITIES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 SECTION 1. Section 37-16-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 37-16-11. (1) A student who has been properly classified,  
9 in accordance with rules established by the state board as  
10 "educable mentally retarded," "trainable mentally retarded,"  
11 "deaf," "specific learning disabled," "physically handicapped  
12 whose ability to communicate orally or in writing is seriously  
13 impaired" or "emotionally handicapped" shall not be required to  
14 meet all requirements of Section 37-16-7, and shall, upon meeting  
15 all applicable requirements prescribed by the district school  
16 board, be awarded a special diploma in a form prescribed by the  
17 state board; provided, however, that such special graduation  
18 requirements prescribed by the district school board shall include  
19 minimum graduation requirements as prescribed by the state board.  
20 Any such student who meets all special requirements of the  
21 district school board for his exceptionality, but is unable to  
22 meet the appropriate special state minimum requirements, shall be  
23 awarded a special certificate of completion in a form prescribed  
24 by the state board. Nothing provided in this section, however,  
25 shall be construed to limit or restrict the right of an  
26 exceptional student solely to a special diploma. Any such student  
27 shall, upon proper request, be afforded the opportunity to fully

28 meet all requirements of Section 37-16-7 through the standard  
29 procedures established therein and thereby qualify for a standard  
30 diploma upon graduation.

31 (2) Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, the State  
32 Board of Education shall develop and issue criteria for a  
33 Mississippi Occupational Diploma for students having a disability  
34 as defined by the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education  
35 Act, and any such student shall, upon proper request, be afforded  
36 the opportunity to fully meet such requirements and qualify for an  
37 occupational diploma upon graduation.

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