

By: Representatives Byrd, Henley, Dixon

To: Education

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
HOUSE BILL NO. 968

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 43-27-203, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO CLARIFY THE SYNONYMOUS MEANING OF THE TERMS "HIGH SCHOOL  
3 EQUIVALENCY DIPLOMA" AND "GED" FOR PURPOSES OF QUALIFYING STUDENTS  
4 IN THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD YOUTH CHALLENGE PROGRAM FOR  
5 GRADUATION; TO BRING FORWARD SECTION 37-4-5, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF  
6 1972, FOR PURPOSES OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENT; AND FOR RELATED  
7 PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 43-27-203, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
10 amended as follows:

11 43-27-203. (1) There is created under the Mississippi  
12 National Guard a program to be known as the "Youth Challenge  
13 Program." The program shall be an interdiction program designed  
14 for children determined to be "at risk" by the National Guard.

15 (2) The Mississippi National Guard shall implement and  
16 administer the Youth Challenge Program and shall promulgate rules  
17 and regulations concerning the administration of the program. The  
18 National Guard shall prepare written guidelines concerning the  
19 nomination and selection process of participants in the program,



20 and such guidelines shall include a list of the factors considered  
21 in the selection process.

22 (3) Participation in the Youth Challenge Program shall be on  
23 a voluntary basis. No child may be sentenced by any court to  
24 participate in the program; however, a youth court judge may refer  
25 the program to a child when, under his determination, such program  
26 would be sufficient to meet the needs of the child.

27 (4) The Mississippi National Guard, under the auspices of  
28 the Challenge Academy, may award an adult high school diploma to  
29 each participant who meets the requirements for a High School  
30 Equivalency Diploma equivalent under the policies and guidelines  
31 of the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education or  
32 other high school equivalency exam and any other minimum academic  
33 requirements prescribed by the National Guard and Challenge  
34 Academy for graduation from the Youth Challenge Program.  
35 Participants in the program who do not meet the minimum academic  
36 requirements may be awarded a special certificate of attendance.  
37 The Mississippi National Guard and the Challenge Academy shall  
38 establish rules and regulations for awarding the adult high school  
39 diploma and shall prescribe the form for such diploma and the  
40 certificate of attendance.

41 (5) The Mississippi National Guard may accept any available  
42 funds that may be used to defray the expenses of the program,  
43 including, but not limited to, federal funding, public or private



44 funds and any funds that may be appropriated by the Legislature  
45 for that purpose.

46 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-4-5, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
47 brought forward as follows:

48 37-4-5. (1) The terms "Junior College Commission" and  
49 "State Board for Community and Junior Colleges," whenever they  
50 appear in the laws of the State of Mississippi, mean the  
51 "Mississippi Community College Board."

52 (2) The term "High School Equivalency Diploma," whenever it  
53 appears in the laws of the State of Mississippi, means a high  
54 school diploma that has been approved by the Mississippi Community  
55 College Board.

56 (3) The terms "general educational development," "general  
57 education development" and "GED," whenever they appear in the laws  
58 of the State of Mississippi, mean a high school equivalency  
59 diploma as defined in subsection (2) of this section.

60 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
61 and after its passage.

