

By: Representative Scott

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 602

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "2024 MISSISSIPPI YOUTHBUILD PILOT
2 PROGRAM ACT"; TO ESTABLISH A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM AT COAHOMA
3 COMMUNITY COLLEGE AND AT JONES COUNTY JUNIOR COLLEGE TO DETERMINE
4 THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF YOUTHBUILD ON HELPING LOW INCOME YOUTH
5 REBUILD THEIR LIVES AND THE COMMUNITIES IN WHICH THEY LIVE; TO
6 PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN DISADVANTAGED YOUTH WILL BE PROVIDED WITH
7 OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM FOR EMPLOYMENT,
8 EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS
9 DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OR REHABILITATION OF
10 HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEEDS POPULATIONS AND LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS;
11 TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS; TO REQUIRE EACH COLLEGE TO APPLY FOR
12 GRANT FUNDING FROM THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR; TO
13 REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES TO PROVIDE THE COLLEGE'S
14 REQUIRED MATCHING FUNDS FOR A YOUTHBUILD GRANT; TO SPECIFY CERTAIN
15 SERVICES THAT MUST BE PROVIDED THROUGH THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM; TO
16 ESTABLISH ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM;
17 TO REQUIRE THE DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES TO
18 SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE ON THE YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM
19 BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2027; TO BRING FORWARD SECTION 43-26-1,
20 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH CREATES THE MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT
21 OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES, FOR PURPOSES OF POSSIBLE AMENDMENT;
22 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

24 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and may be cited as the
25 "2024 Mississippi YouthBuild Pilot Program Act."

26 **SECTION 2.** (1) There is created the Mississippi YouthBuild
27 Pilot Program, the purpose of which is to establish a YouthBuild
28 program in conjunction with a community or junior college in



29 different regions of the state in order to assess the potential
30 impact the program may have on helping low income young adults
31 rebuild their lives and the communities in which they live. The
32 pilot program initially will consist of two (2) YouthBuild
33 programs, one to be sponsored and managed by Coahoma Community
34 College and one to be sponsored and managed by Jones County Junior
35 College.

36 (2) The specific purposes of the YouthBuild Pilot Program
37 are as follows:

38 (a) To enable economically disadvantaged youth,
39 especially youth who have not finished high school, to obtain the
40 education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership
41 development skills training, job placement assistance and
42 long-term follow-up services necessary for them to achieve
43 permanent economic self-sufficiency, while at the same time
44 providing valuable community service that addresses urgent
45 community needs, including the demand for affordable housing and
46 the need for young role models and mentors for younger teenagers
47 and children;

48 (b) To provide communities the opportunity to establish
49 or rebuild neighborhood stability in economically depressed and
50 low income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration
51 or preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth
52 and youth who have not finished high school an opportunity for
53 meaningful participation in society;



54 (c) To allow communities to expand the supply of
55 affordable housing for homeless and other low income individuals
56 by utilizing the energies and talents of economically
57 disadvantaged youth and young people who have not finished high
58 school;

59 (d) To foster the development of leadership skills and
60 a commitment to community development among youth; and

61 (e) To determine the effectiveness of the YouthBuild
62 programs established under this act in achieving the purposes set
63 forth in this subsection and to assess the desirability and
64 feasibility of establishing additional YouthBuild programs in
65 conjunction with community and junior colleges throughout the
66 state.

67 **SECTION 3.** As used in this act, the following words and
68 phrases have the meanings ascribed in this section unless the
69 context clearly indicates otherwise:

70 (a) "College" means Coahoma Community College and Jones
71 County Junior College.

72 (b) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of
73 Human Services.

74 (c) "Department of Labor" means the United States
75 Department of Labor.

76 (d) "YouthBuild" means the community-based
77 pre-apprenticeship program that provides job training and
78 educational opportunities for at-risk youth who have dropped out



79 of high school which is administered by the Division of Youth
80 Services within the Employment and Training Administration's
81 Office Of Workforce Investment at the Department of Labor.

82 **SECTION 4.** (1) Coahoma Community College and Jones County
83 Junior College shall each apply to the Department of Labor for
84 grant funding for the support of a YouthBuild program. In order
85 for each site to secure the maximum available grant of One Million
86 One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$1,100,000.00) from the Department
87 of Labor, the Division of Family and Children's Services of the
88 Department of Human Services shall provide to each college, from
89 any funds available to the department which are not allocated
90 otherwise, the minimally required twenty-five percent (25%)
91 matching nonfederal funds.

92 (2) As a condition of receiving matching funds from the
93 department, funding for the support of each YouthBuild program
94 established under this act must be used in a manner consistent
95 with the terms of the grant from the Department of Labor and at a
96 minimum, must cover the costs of the following services:

97 (a) Acquisition or rehabilitation, or both, or
98 construction of housing and related facilities to be used for the
99 purpose of providing home ownership for disadvantaged persons,
100 residential housing for homeless individuals and low income
101 families or transitional housing for persons who are homeless,
102 disabled, ill or deinstitutionalized or who have special needs,



103 and rehabilitation or construction of community facilities by
104 nonprofit or public agencies.

105 (b) Integrated education and job skills training
106 services and activities, with fifty percent (50%) of students'
107 time in the program devoted to classroom-based instruction,
108 counseling and leadership development instruction and the
109 remaining fifty percent (50%) of students' time spent in
110 experimental training on the construction site. The programs must
111 include, at a minimum, the following elements:

112 (i) An education component that includes basic
113 skills instruction, secondary education services and other
114 activities designed to lead to the attainment of a high school
115 diploma or its equivalent. The curriculum for this component must
116 include math, language arts, vocational education, life skills
117 training, social studies related to the cultural and community
118 history of the students, leadership skills and other topics at the
119 discretion of the program. Bilingual services must be available
120 for individuals with limited English proficiency. The desired
121 minimum teacher to student ratio is one (1) teacher for every
122 twelve (12) students.

123 (ii) A work experience and skills training
124 apprenticeship program component that includes the construction
125 and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (a) of this
126 subsection. The process of construction must be coupled with
127 skills training and with close onsite supervision by experienced



128 trainers. The curriculum for this component must contain a set of
129 locally agreed upon skills and competencies that are
130 systematically taught, with a student's mastery assessed
131 individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills must be
132 taught at the outset. The desired trainer to student ratio is one
133 (1) trainer for every seven (7) students. The work experience and
134 skills training component must be coordinated to the maximum
135 extent feasible with preapprenticeship and apprenticeship
136 programs.

137 (iii) Assistance in attaining postsecondary
138 education and required financial aid, which must be made available
139 to participants before graduation.

140 (c) Counseling services designed to assist participants
141 in positively participating in society, which should include all
142 of the following, if necessary: outreach, assessment and
143 orientation; individual and peer counseling; life skills training;
144 drug and alcohol abuse education and prevention; and referral to
145 appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal,
146 housing and other services and resources in the community. The
147 desired counselor to participant ratio is one (1) counselor for
148 every twenty-four (24) students.

149 (d) Leadership development training that provides
150 participants with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership
151 skills such as decision making, problem solving and negotiating.
152 The program also must encourage participants to develop strong



153 peer group ties that support their mutual pursuit of skills and
154 values. Each program must establish a youth council in which
155 participants are afforded opportunities to develop public speaking
156 and negotiating skills and to participate in management and policy
157 making in specific aspects of the program.

158 (e) A training subsidy, living allowance or stipend
159 that is no less than the minimum wage, which must be provided to
160 program participants for the time spent at the work site in
161 construction training. For those participants who receive public
162 assistance, this training subsidy, living allowance or stipend
163 will not affect their housing benefits, medical benefits, child
164 care benefits or food stamp benefits. Stipends and wages may be
165 distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good
166 performance.

167 (3) Full time participation in a YouthBuild program
168 established under this act must be offered for a period of not
169 less than six (6) months and not more than twenty-four (24)
170 months.

171 (4) A concentrated effort must be made to find construction,
172 construction-related and nonconstruction jobs for all graduates of
173 the program who have performed well. The skills training
174 curriculum must provide participants with basic preparation for
175 seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up counseling and
176 assistance in job seeking must be provided to participants for
177 twelve (12) months following graduation from the program.



178 (5) If a program created under this act serves twenty-four
179 (24) trainees, the community or junior college shall employ a
180 fulltime director to be responsible for the coordination of all
181 aspects of the YouthBuild program.

182 **SECTION 5.** Subject to any restrictions or requirements
183 established by the Department of Labor, funding for the YouthBuild
184 program may be used to cover the costs of other eligible
185 activities, including the following:

186 (a) Legal fees for housing acquisition.

187 (b) Administrative costs of the community or junior
188 college, which may not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the amount
189 of funding provided.

190 (c) Defraying costs of the ongoing training and
191 technical assistance needs of the recipients which are related to
192 developing and carrying out the YouthBuild program. The community
193 or junior college may enter into a contract with YouthBuild USA
194 for assistance in providing training and technical assistance to,
195 or in the management, supervision and coordination of, the
196 YouthBuild program.

197 **SECTION 6.** To be eligible to participate in a YouthBuild
198 program, an individual must be at least sixteen (16) but no more
199 than twenty-four (24) years of age and must be economically
200 disadvantaged, as defined in 29 USCS Section 1508, and except as
201 otherwise provided in this section, must be a member of one (1) of
202 the following groups:



203 (a) Persons who are not attending any school and have
204 not received a high school diploma or its equivalent.

205 (b) Persons enrolled in a traditional or alternative
206 school setting or a GED program who are in danger of dropping out
207 of school.

208 (c) Very low income persons.

209 Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the participants in the
210 program may be individuals who do not meet the requirements of
211 paragraph (a), (b) or (c) of this section but who have educational
212 needs despite the attainment of a high school diploma.

213 **SECTION 7.** Before January 1, 2027, the Division of Family
214 and Children's Services within the Department of Human Services
215 shall submit a report to the House of Representatives and the
216 Senate on the YouthBuild Pilot Program. The report must include,
217 but need not be limited to, the following:

218 (a) A description of the experience of Coahoma
219 Community College and Jones County Junior College in operating a
220 YouthBuild program, with specific information relating to the
221 nature and number of housing rehabilitation or construction
222 projects undertaken and the experience of youth who participated
223 in the program;

224 (b) A description of the opportunities for youth
225 leadership development and employment training afforded by the
226 YouthBuild program and data reflecting the number of participants
227 who enrolled in the program, along with the rate of completion;



228 (c) A description of the educational and job training
229 activities, work opportunities and other services provided to
230 program participants, along with specific data on the educational
231 attainments achieved by participants;

232 (d) A description of the manner in which eligible
233 youths were recruited and selected, including a description of the
234 arrangements that were made with community-based organizations,
235 local education agencies, public assistance agencies, the courts
236 of jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for
237 homeless individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth,
238 foster care agencies, and other appropriate public and private
239 agencies;

240 (e) A description of any special efforts that were
241 undertaken to recruit eligible young women (including young women
242 with dependent children) with appropriate supports, especially
243 child care;

244 (f) A description of how each YouthBuild program
245 coordinated, when appropriate, with other federal, state or local
246 activities and activities conducted by public schools, crime
247 prevention programs, vocational, adult and bilingual education
248 programs and job training;

249 (g) Data reflecting the sufficiency of the number of
250 adequately trained supervisory personnel in the YouthBuild
251 program;



252 (h) A description of any relationship the YouthBuild
253 program established with local apprenticeship programs;

254 (i) A description of the activities that were
255 undertaken to develop the leadership skills of participants,
256 including their role in decision making;

257 (j) A detailed financial report and a description of
258 the systems of fiscal controls and auditing and accountability
259 procedures that were used to ensure fiscal soundness;

260 (k) A description of any contracts or other
261 arrangements entered into between the college and other agencies
262 and entities, including all in-kind donations and grants from both
263 public and private entities which were received to augment
264 YouthBuild grant funding; and

265 (l) A review of the overall effectiveness of the
266 YouthBuild programs and recommendations on the desirability and
267 feasibility of establishing additional YouthBuild programs at
268 community and junior colleges throughout the state.

269 **SECTION 8.** Section 43-26-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
270 brought forward as follows:

271 43-26-1. (1) There is created a Mississippi Department of
272 Child Protection Services.

273 (2) The Chief Administrative Officer of the Department of
274 Child Protection Services shall be the Commissioner of Child
275 Protection Services who shall be appointed by the Governor with



276 the advice and consent of the Senate. The commissioner shall
277 possess the following qualifications:

278 (a) A bachelor's degree from an accredited institution
279 of higher learning and ten (10) years' experience in management,
280 public administration, finance or accounting; or

281 (b) A master's or doctoral degree from an accredited
282 institution of higher learning and five (5) years' experience in
283 management, public administration, finance, law or accounting.

284 (3) The Department of Child Protection Services shall
285 provide the services authorized by law to every individual
286 determined to be eligible therefor, and in carrying out the
287 purposes of the department, the commissioner is authorized:

288 (a) To formulate the policy of the department regarding
289 child welfare services within the jurisdiction of the department;

290 (b) To adopt, modify, repeal and promulgate, after due
291 notice and hearing, and where not otherwise prohibited by federal
292 or state law, to make exceptions to and grant exemptions and
293 variances from, and to enforce rules and regulations implementing
294 or effectuating the powers and duties of the department under any
295 and all statutes within the department's jurisdiction;

296 (c) To apply for, receive and expend any federal or
297 state funds or contributions, gifts, devises, bequests or funds
298 from any other source;

299 (d) To enter into and execute contracts, grants and
300 cooperative agreements with any federal or state agency or



301 subdivision thereof, or any public or private institution located
302 inside or outside the State of Mississippi, or any person,
303 corporation or association in connection with carrying out the
304 programs of the department; and

305 (e) To discharge such other duties, responsibilities,
306 and powers as are necessary to implement the programs of the
307 department.

308 (4) The commissioner shall establish the organizational
309 structure of the Department of Child Protection Services, which
310 shall include the creation of any units necessary to implement the
311 duties assigned to the department and consistent with specific
312 requirements of law.

313 (5) The commissioner shall appoint heads of offices,
314 bureaus, and divisions, as defined in Section 7-17-11, who shall
315 serve at the pleasure of the commissioner. The salary and
316 compensation of such office, bureau and division heads shall be
317 subject to the rules and regulations adopted and promulgated by
318 the State Personnel Board. The commissioner shall have the
319 authority to organize offices as deemed appropriate to carry out
320 the responsibilities of the department.

321 (6) The Department of Child Protection Services shall be
322 responsible for the development, execution, and provision of
323 services in the following areas:

324 (a) Protective services for children;

325 (b) Foster care;



326 (c) Adoption services;
327 (d) Special services;
328 (e) Interstate compact;
329 (f) Licensure;
330 (g) Prevention services; and
331 (h) Such other services as may be designated. Services
332 enumerated under Section 43-15-13 et seq., for the foster care
333 program shall be provided by qualified staff with appropriate case
334 loads.

335 (7) The Department of Child Protection Services shall have
336 the following powers and duties:

337 (a) To provide basic services and assistance statewide
338 to needy and disadvantaged individuals and families;

339 (b) To promote integration of the many services and
340 programs within its jurisdiction at the client level thus
341 improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery and
342 providing easier access to clients;

343 (c) To employ personnel and expend funds appropriated
344 to the department to carry out the duties and responsibilities
345 assigned to the department by law;

346 (d) To fingerprint and conduct a background
347 investigation on every employee, contractor, subcontractor and
348 volunteer:

349 (i) Who has direct access to clients of the
350 department who are children or vulnerable adults;



351 (ii) Who is in a position of fiduciary
352 responsibility;
353 (iii) Who is in a position with access to Federal
354 Tax Information (FTI); or
355 (iv) Who is otherwise required by federal law or
356 regulations to undergo a background investigation.

357 Every such employee, contractor, subcontractor and volunteer
358 shall provide a valid current social security number and/or
359 driver's license number, which shall be furnished to conduct the
360 background investigation for determination as to good moral
361 character and to ensure that no person placed in any position
362 referenced in this paragraph (d) has a felony conviction that
363 would prevent employment or access to Federal Tax Information
364 according to department policy. If no disqualifying record is
365 identified at the state level, the fingerprints shall be forwarded
366 to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for a fingerprint-based
367 national criminal history record check. The department shall be
368 the recipient of the results of any background investigation
369 and/or criminal history record check performed in accordance with
370 this paragraph;

371 (e) To establish and maintain programs not inconsistent
372 with the terms of this chapter and the rules, regulations and
373 policies of the Department of Child Protection Services, and
374 publish the rules and regulations of the department pertaining to
375 such programs;



376 (f) To provide all other child welfare programs and
377 services previously provided by the Department of Human Services
378 or a division thereof; and

379 (g) Make such reports in such form and containing such
380 information as the federal government may, from time to time,
381 require, and comply with such provisions as the federal government
382 may, from time to time, find necessary to assure the correctness
383 and verification of such reports.

384 (8) The Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services
385 shall submit a copy of the federal Annual Progress and Services
386 Report (APSR) to the Chair of the Senate Public Health and Welfare
387 Committee, the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the
388 Chair of the House Public Health and Human Services Committee, the
389 Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, the Lieutenant
390 Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and the
391 Governor by December 1 of each year.

392 (9) (a) The Commissioner of Child Protection Services shall
393 hire a Coordinator of Services for Victims of Human Trafficking
394 and Commercial Sexual Exploitation within the Department of Child
395 Protection Services whose duties shall include, but not be limited
396 to, the following:

397 (i) To form specialized human trafficking and
398 commercial sexual exploitation assessment teams to respond on an
399 as-needed basis to act as an emergency, separate and specialized
400 response and assessment team to rapidly respond to the needs of



401 children who are victims of human trafficking and commercial
402 sexual exploitation;

403 (ii) To identify victims of human trafficking and
404 commercial sexual exploitation;

405 (iii) To monitor, record and distribute federal
406 human trafficking funds received by the Department of Child
407 Protection Services;

408 (iv) To employ staff to investigate allegations of
409 human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation; and

410 (v) To develop and coordinate services within the
411 Department of Child Protection Services and with outside service
412 providers for victims of human trafficking and commercial sexual
413 exploitation.

414 (b) The Commissioner of Child Protection Services shall
415 develop standard operating procedures for the investigation,
416 custody and services provided to alleged victims of human
417 trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation.

418 (c) The Commissioner shall require two (2) hours of
419 training regarding the subject of identifying, assessing, and
420 providing comprehensive services to a child who has experienced or
421 is alleged to have experienced commercial sexual exploitation or
422 human trafficking. The training must be incorporated into the
423 pre-service training requirements of all Mississippi Department of
424 Child Protection Services family specialists, adoption
425 specialists, licensure specialists, direct supervisors of family



426 protection specialists, direct supervisors of adoption
427 specialists, and direct supervisors of licensure specialists.

428 (10) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2028.

429 **SECTION 10.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
430 and after July 1, 2024.

