

By: Representatives Hines, Bailey

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 978

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI YOUTHBUILD ACT TO BE
 2 ADMINISTERED BY THE OFFICE OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OF
 3 THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES; TO PROVIDE THAT CERTAIN
 4 DISADVANTAGED YOUTH WILL BE PROVIDED WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR
 5 EMPLOYMENT, EDUCATION, LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, ENTREPRENEURIAL
 6 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT, AND TRAINING IN THE CONSTRUCTION OR
 7 REHABILITATION OF HOUSING FOR SPECIAL NEED POPULATIONS, VERY
 8 LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS, OR LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS; TO ESTABLISH
 9 REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTHBUILD PROGRAMS, ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES,
 10 ENTITIES ELIGIBLE TO ADMINISTER A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM, AND GRANT
 11 APPLICATIONS TO ADMINISTER A YOUTHBUILD PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED
 12 PURPOSES.

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

14 **SECTION 1.** This act may be cited as the "Mississippi
 15 Youthbuild Act."

16 **SECTION 2.** The purpose of this act is:

17 (a) To enable economically disadvantaged youth,
 18 especially youth who have not finished high school, to obtain the
 19 education, job skills training, personal counseling, leadership
 20 development skills training, job placement assistance, and
 21 long-term follow-up services necessary for them to achieve
 22 permanent economic self-sufficiency, while at the same time
 23 providing valuable community service that addresses urgent
 24 community needs, including the demand for affordable housing and
 25 the need for young role models and mentors for younger teenagers
 26 and children;

27 (b) To provide communities the opportunity to establish
 28 or rebuild neighborhood stability in economically depressed and
 29 low-income areas, as well as historic areas requiring restoration
 30 or preservation, while providing economically disadvantaged youth
 31 and youth who have not finished high school an opportunity for
 32 meaningful participation in society;

33 (c) To allow communities to expand the supply of
34 affordable housing for homeless and other low-income individuals
35 by utilizing the energies and talents of economically
36 disadvantaged youth and young people who have not graduated from
37 high school; and

38 (d) To foster the development of leadership skills and
39 a commitment to community development among youth.

40 **SECTION 3.** As used in this act:

41 (a) "Applicant" means a public or private
42 not-for-profit agency eligible to provide education and employment
43 training under federal or state employment training programs.

44 (b) "Director" means the Director of the Office of
45 Family and Children's Services of the Department of Human
46 Services.

47 (c) "Very low-income" means a person or household whose
48 income is at or below fifty percent (50%) of the median family
49 income, adjusted for household size, for the county where the
50 household is located.

51 (d) "Youthbuild" means any program that provides
52 disadvantaged youth with opportunities for employment, education,
53 leadership development, entrepreneurial skills development, and
54 training in the construction or rehabilitation of housing for
55 special need populations, very low-income households or low-income
56 households.

57 **SECTION 4.** The director is authorized to make grants to
58 applicants for the purpose of carrying out Youthbuild programs as
59 approved under this section. All programs funded under the
60 provisions of this section shall reflect strong youth and
61 community involvement. In addition, funding provided under this
62 section shall be used by each Youthbuild program to provide, at a
63 minimum, the following services:

64 (a) Acquisition, rehabilitation, acquisition and
65 rehabilitation, or construction of housing and related facilities

66 to be used for the purpose of providing home ownership for
67 disadvantaged persons, residential housing for homeless
68 individuals, and low-income and very low-income families, or
69 transitional housing for persons who are homeless, have
70 disabilities, are ill, are deinstitutionalized, or have special
71 needs, and rehabilitation or construction of community facilities
72 by not-for-profit or public agencies.

73 (b) Integrated education and job skills training
74 services and activities, which are evenly divided within the
75 program, with fifty percent (50%) of students' time spent in
76 classroom-based instruction, counseling, and leadership
77 development instruction and fifty percent (50%) of their time
78 spent in experimental training on the construction site. The
79 programs shall include, at a minimum, the following elements:

80 (i) An education component that includes basic
81 skills instruction, secondary education services, and other
82 activities designed to lead to the attainment of a high school
83 diploma or its equivalent. The curriculum for this component
84 shall include math, language arts, vocational education, life
85 skills training, social studies related to the cultural and
86 community history of the students, leadership skills, and other
87 topics at the discretion of the programs. Bilingual services
88 shall be available for individuals with limited English
89 proficiency. The desired minimum teacher to student ratio shall
90 be one (1) teacher for every twelve (12) students.

91 (ii) A work experience and skills training
92 component apprenticeship program that includes the construction
93 and rehabilitation activities described in paragraph (a) of this
94 section. The process of construction must be coupled with skills
95 training and with close on-site supervision by experienced
96 trainers. The curriculum for this component shall contain a set
97 of locally agreed upon skills and competencies that are
98 systematically taught, with a student's mastery assessed

99 individually on a regular, ongoing basis. Safety skills shall be
100 taught at the outset. The desired trainer to student ratio shall
101 be one (1) trainer for every seven (7) students. The work
102 experience and skills training component shall be coordinated to
103 the maximum extent feasible with preapprenticeship and
104 apprenticeship programs.

105 (iii) Assistance in attaining post secondary
106 education and required financial aid shall be made available to
107 participants before graduation.

108 (c) Counseling services designed to assist participants
109 to positively participate in society, which should include all of
110 the following if necessary: outreach, assessment and orientation;
111 individual and peer counseling; life skills training; drug and
112 alcohol abuse education and prevention; and referral to
113 appropriate drug rehabilitation, medical, mental health, legal,
114 housing, and other services and resources in the community. The
115 desired counselor to participant ratio shall be one (1) counselor
116 for every twenty-four (24) students.

117 (d) Leadership development training that provides
118 participants with meaningful opportunities to develop leadership
119 skills such as decision making, problem solving and negotiating.
120 The program must also encourage participants to develop strong
121 peer group ties that support their mutual pursuit of skills and
122 values. All programs must establish a youth council in which
123 participants are afforded opportunities to develop public speaking
124 and negotiating skills, and management and policy making
125 participation in specific aspects of the program.

126 (e) A training subsidy, living allowance or stipend
127 that is no less than the minimum wage must be provided to program
128 participants for the time spent at the work site in construction
129 training. For those participants who receive public assistance,
130 this training subsidy, living allowance, or stipend will not
131 affect their housing benefits, medical benefits, child care

132 benefits or food stamp benefits. Stipends and wages may be
133 distributed in a manner that offers incentives for good
134 performance.

135 (f) Full-time participation in a Youthbuild program
136 shall be offered for a period of not less than six (6) months and
137 not more than twenty-four (24) months.

138 (g) A concentrated effort shall be made to find
139 construction, construction-related, and nonconstruction jobs for
140 all graduates of the program who have performed well. The skills
141 training curriculum shall provide participants with basic
142 preparation for seeking and maintaining a job. Follow-up
143 counseling and assistance in job seeking also shall be provided to
144 participants for twelve (12) months following graduation from the
145 program.

146 (h) All programs serving twenty-four (24) trainees or
147 more are required to have a full-time director responsible for the
148 coordination of all aspects of the Youthbuild program.

149 **SECTION 5.** Implementation grants may be used to carry out
150 the activities listed in Section 4 of this act. Other eligible
151 activities include the following:

152 (a) Legal fees for housing acquisition.

153 (b) Administrative costs of the applicant, which may
154 not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the amount of assistance
155 provided, or such higher percentage as the director determines is
156 necessary to support capacity development of a private nonprofit
157 community-based organization.

158 (c) Defraying costs for the ongoing training and
159 technical assistance needs of the recipients that are related to
160 developing and carrying out the Youthbuild program, including the
161 following: The director may reserve up to five percent (5%) of
162 the Mississippi Youthbuild program appropriations to enter into a
163 contract with Youthbuild USA to provide assistance to the director
164 in providing training and technical assistance to, or in the

165 management, supervision, and coordination of, Youthbuild programs
166 under this act.

167 **SECTION 6.** Eligible participants are youth sixteen (16) to
168 twenty-four (24) years old who are economically disadvantaged as
169 defined in 29 USCS Section 1508, and who are part of one (1) of
170 the following groups:

171 (a) Persons who are not attending any school and have
172 not received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent.

173 (b) Persons currently enrolled in a traditional or
174 alternative school setting or a GED program and who are in danger
175 of dropping out of school.

176 (c) Very low-income persons.

177 Up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the participants in the
178 program may be individuals who do not meet the requirements of
179 paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of this section, but who have
180 educational needs despite the attainment of a high school diploma.

181 **SECTION 7.** (1) Those eligible to be awarded funds under
182 this act are not-for-profit private agencies, or public agencies
183 with experience operating a Youthbuild program or with a plan to
184 incubate a Youthbuild program until it can be established as a
185 not-for-profit private agency.

186 (2) Priority in the awarding of funds under this act shall
187 be given to applicants with experience in operating Youthbuild
188 programs. Organizations claiming to have operated Youthbuild
189 programs must be licensed by Youthbuild USA or be organizations
190 that have received federal HUD Youthbuild funding.

191 **SECTION 8.** The director shall require that an application
192 for Youthbuild funds under this act contain at a minimum:

193 (a) A request for an implementation grant, specifying
194 the amount of the grant requested and its proposed uses;

195 (b) A description of the applicant and a statement of
196 its qualifications, including a description of the applicant's
197 past experience running a Youthbuild program, and with housing

198 rehabilitation or construction and with youth and youth education,
199 youth leadership development and employment training programs, and
200 its relationship with local unions and youth apprenticeship
201 programs and other community groups;

202 (c) A description of the proposed construction site for
203 the program and evidence of site control;

204 (d) A description of the educational and job training
205 activities, work opportunities and other services that will be
206 provided to participants;

207 (e) A description of the proposed construction or
208 rehabilitation activities to be undertaken and the anticipated
209 schedule for carrying out those activities;

210 (f) A description of the manner in which eligible
211 youths will be recruited and selected, including a description of
212 the arrangements that will be made with community-based
213 organizations, local education agencies, including agencies of
214 Native American nations, public assistance agencies, the courts of
215 jurisdiction for status and youth offenders, shelters for homeless
216 individuals and other agencies that serve homeless youth, foster
217 care agencies, and other appropriate public and private agencies;

218 (g) A description of the special efforts that will be
219 undertaken to recruit eligible young women (including young women
220 with dependent children) with appropriate supports, especially
221 childcare;

222 (h) A description of how the proposed program will be
223 coordinated with other federal, state, and local activities and
224 activities conducted by Native American nations, including public
225 schools, national service, crime prevention programs, vocational,
226 adult, and bilingual education programs and job training;

227 (i) Assurances that there will be a sufficient number
228 of adequately trained supervisory personnel in the program who
229 have attained the level of journeyman or its equivalent;

230 (j) A description of the applicant's relationship with
231 any local building trade unions that may exist, regarding their
232 involvement in training, and the relationship of the Youthbuild
233 program with established apprenticeship programs;

234 (k) A description of activities that will be undertaken
235 to develop the leadership skills of participants, including their
236 role in decision making;

237 (l) A detailed budget and a description of the systems
238 of fiscal controls and auditing and accountability procedures that
239 will be used to ensure fiscal soundness;

240 (m) A description of any contracts and arrangements
241 entered into between the applicant and other agencies and
242 entities, including all in-kind donations and grants from both
243 public and private entities that will serve to augment funds
244 appropriated for this act;

245 (n) Identification and description of the financing
246 proposed for any acquisition of the property, rehabilitation or
247 construction;

248 (o) Identification and description of the entity that
249 will operate and manage the property;

250 (p) A certification that the applicant will comply with
251 the requirements of the Fair Housing Act, Title VI of the Civil
252 Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973,
253 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and will affirmatively
254 further fair housing; and

255 (q) The qualifications and past experience of the
256 person who will fill the full-time director position.

257 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
258 and after July 1, 2004.