

1 **State of Arkansas**
2 **78th General Assembly**
3 **Regular Session, 1991**

A Bill

HOUSE BILL

4 **By: Representatives Willems and Flanagin**

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For An Act To Be Entitled

8 "AN ACT TO PROTECT THE HEALTH AND WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE OF
9 THE STATE OF ARKANSAS BY CREATING A STATEWIDE PROGRAM TO
10 PROMOTE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND SELF-WORTH;
11 AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES."

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13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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15 SECTION 1. Legislative Findings and Intent.

16 (a) Millions of dollars are spent each year in Arkansas fighting
17 destruction created by our worsening social problems. Little improvement has
18 been seen as a result of the money spent through existing programs on these
19 problems. The costs expressed in human and societal terms are manifested in
20 broken families and broken lives, hopelessness, despair, and even death.
21 Moreover, these costs are steadily increasing.

22 (b) Research has established a causal relationship between a lack of
23 self-esteem and crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, welfare dependency,
24 high school dropouts, teen pregnancy, recidivism, child abuse and teen
25 suicide. People who esteem themselves are less likely to engage in these
26 types of destructive and self-destructive behavior and more likely to engage
27 in positive behavior and be productive members of society. Therefore, the
28 Arkansas General Assembly believes that the best and most cost effective
29 manner in which to solve these problems is to address the root causes which
30 are a lack of self-worth and no sense of personal and social responsibility.
31 In order to accomplish that, a program to promote personal and social
32 responsibility and self-worth is necessary. An effort should be made to
33 coordinate a statewide program through county task forces with local
34 volunteers who will work together to develop plans for their areas to
35 eliminate or reduce these social problems which are weakening our state and

1 destroying its future.

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3 SECTION 2. (a) There is hereby established the Joint Interim
4 Subcommittee on Personal and Social Responsibility and Self-Worth of the Joint
5 Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare and Labor and the Joint Interim
6 Committee on Education to be composed of the following members:

7 (1) Three (3) members of the Joint Interim Committee on Public
8 Health, Welfare and Labor, one (1) Senator and two (2) Representatives;

9 (2) Three (3) members of the Joint Interim Committee on
10 Education, one (1) Senator and two (2) Representatives;

11 (3) The chairmen of the Joint Interim Committee on Public Health,
12 Welfare and Labor and the Joint Interim Committee on Education shall serve as
13 ex-officio members.

14 (b) The chairperson of this subcommittee shall be elected by the
15 members of the subcommittee at the first meeting.

16 (c) Members shall be paid mileage and per diem by their respective
17 Joint Interim Committees.

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19 SECTION 3. The purpose of this subcommittee shall be to:

20 (1) ensure coordination and cooperation between state agencies on the
21 development of a statewide effort to promote personal and social
22 responsibility and self-worth;

23 (2) promote public awareness of the findings, policies and programs
24 most likely to be effective in building or restoring self-worth;

25 (3) encourage in each county the formation of a volunteer task force to
26 develop and initiate a program for promoting personal and social
27 responsibility and self-worth for the area;

28 (4) keep abreast of new research in the area;

29 (5) monitor results of the state agencies and local school districts
30 and report to the Arkansas General Assembly prior to the 1993 Regular Session
31 on the progress made and recommendations for the future;

32 (6) generate an effort to inform the public of the relationship between
33 self-worth and the state's major social problems and how personal and social
34 responsibility and self-worth can be harmed, nurtured, and rebuilt and to
35 identify ways the public can become involved in the solution;

1 (7) survey government and other public institutions, including
2 government agencies, school and public assistance programs to determine
3 whether the manner in which they treat people serves to dehumanize persons and
4 adversely affect their healthy sense of self-worth;

5 (8) determine ways in which nongovernmental institutions, including
6 family, social and religious organizations can be more supportive of the
7 development and perpetuation of healthy self-worth;

8 (9) develop early intervention programs for preschool children and work
9 with existing programs to strengthen them; and

10 (10) work with the Department of Education, Department of Higher
11 Education, Vocational-Technical Education Division of the Department of
12 Education, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of
13 Correction, and other entities which the subcommittee may identify that impact
14 personal and social responsibility and self-worth in Arkansans to formulate
15 policy to recommend to the Arkansas General Assembly and the Governor to
16 promote personal and social responsibility and self-worth.

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18 SECTION 4. All departments, commissions, boards, agencies, officers,
19 and institutions and subdivisions of this state shall cooperate with the
20 subcommittee in carrying out the powers and purposes of this act.

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22 SECTION 5. Three (3) months prior to the convening of the 1993 Regular
23 Session, the subcommittee shall submit a report to the Joint Interim Committee
24 on Public Health, Welfare and Labor and the Joint Interim Committee on
25 Education their findings and recommendations.

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27 SECTION 6. The subcommittee, the Governor, the Arkansas General
28 Assembly and state agencies shall encourage the development of a group of
29 volunteers in each county to act as a county task force. In large or highly
30 populated areas, these task forces may break into subcommittees representing a
31 particular community. The task force shall be made up of a wide variety of
32 people representing all citizens in the county, including local school
33 districts, institutions of higher learning, service agencies, business
34 leaders, parents, and others interested in promoting personal and social
35 responsibility and self-worth.

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2 SECTION 7. The county task forces shall develop a plan for instituting
3 a program to promote personal and social responsibility and self-worth in
4 their counties. The program shall be designed to include as many groups of
5 people as possible, but should begin with parents, children and teachers.

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7 SECTION 8. These county task forces shall promote the exercise of
8 responsible citizenship, so as to enable individuals to become personally
9 involved in the creation of policies, programs and environments, that will
10 enhance personal and social responsibility and self-worth, and therefore,
11 responsible citizenship in their counties.

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13 SECTION 9. The State Board of Education shall adopt as one of its goals
14 the promotion of personal and social responsibility and self-worth. The State
15 Board of Education shall direct the Department of Education to work with the
16 subcommittee, the Department of Health and other state agencies as needed to
17 implement a program of personal and social responsibility and self-worth.

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19 SECTION 10. The Department of Education shall require schools to include
20 in their curriculum instruction promoting personal and social responsibility
21 and self-worth for all students from kindergarten through high school. The
22 Department of Education shall require a method for addressing the goal of
23 promoting personal and social responsibility and self-worth to be included in
24 the district and individual school plan, required by the Education Planning
25 Act of 1983 (Ark. Code Ann. §6-15-101).

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27 SECTION 11. Each school district within a particular county shall
28 appoint a person to the appropriate county task force once established. Each
29 school district shall make the promotion of personal and social responsibility
30 and self-worth a priority. The in-service curriculum of each district shall
31 include training in the promotion of personal and social responsibility and
32 self-worth.

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34 SECTION 12. Each institution of higher education shall adopt as one of
35 its goals the promotion of personal and social responsibility and self-worth.

1 Each institution shall develop a program which will include ways to achieve
2 this among the staff and faculty, as well as the students. In particular,
3 education and training should be incorporated into the curriculum of education
4 majors, in addition to other service-type majors, such as social work. In
5 counties which have county task forces, institutions shall appoint a person to
6 serve on this task force.

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8 SECTION 13. Each vocational-technical school shall review their policies
9 and curriculum to ensure that they do not operate in a manner which serves to
10 dehumanize persons. Each vocational-technical school shall develop a program
11 to promote personal and social responsibility and self-worth for their
12 institution both in the faculty and students. Vocational-technical schools
13 can play a major role in promoting self-worth, particularly in non-college-
14 bound students. In counties which county task forces exists, schools shall
15 appoint a person to serve on this task force.

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17 SECTION 14. State agencies shall evaluate their policies, programs and
18 staff to ensure that they do not operate in a manner which serves to
19 dehumanize persons and adversely affect their healthy sense of self-worth.
20 State agencies shall determine ways in which they, in particular their public
21 assistance programs, can be more supportive of the development and
22 perpetuation of a healthy sense of self-worth. These goals shall be
23 incorporated into the orientation and training of new employees, as well as
24 periodic in-service for existing employees. In counties which have county
25 task forces, agencies shall appoint a person to serve on this task force.

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27 SECTION 15. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent
28 nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas
29 Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

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31 SECTION 16. If any provision of this Act or the application thereof to
32 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
33 other provisions or applications of the Act which can be given effect without
34 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
35 Act are declared to be severable.

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SECTION 17. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are hereby repealed.

SECTION 18. Emergency. It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly that research has established a casual relationship between a lack of self-worth and crime, violence, alcohol and drug abuse, welfare dependency, high school dropouts, teen pregnancy, recidivism, child abuse and teen suicide; that people who have a high sense of self-worth are less likely to engage in these types of destructive and self-destructive behavior and more likely to engage in positive behavior and be productive members of society; that the creation of a legislative subcommittee is necessary to develop plans to eliminate or reduce these social problems by enhancing one's sense of self-worth; and that this subcommittee needs to be created immediately in order to address these problems. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this act being necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and approval.

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