

1 **State of Arkansas**
2 **78th General Assembly**
3 **Regular Session, 1991**
4 **By: Representative Willems**

A Bill

HOUSE BILL

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."

12
13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

14
15 SECTION 1. Legislative Findings and Intent. (a) Millions of dollars
16 are spent each year in Arkansas fighting destruction created by our worsening
17 social problems. Little improvement has been seen as a result of the money
18 spent through existing programs on these problems. The costs expressed in
19 human and societal terms are manifested in broken families and broken lives,
20 hopelessness, despair, and even death. Moreover, these costs are steadily
21 increasing.

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

1 weakening our state and destroying its future.

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3 SECTION 2. As used in this act, "self worth" means appreciating one's
4 own worth and importance and having the character to be accountable for
5 oneself and to act responsibly toward others.

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7 SECTION 3. (a) There is hereby created the Arkansas Task Force to
8 Promote Personal and Social Responsibility and Self Worth.

9 (b) The task force shall be made up of eighteen (18) members to be
10 appointed by the Governor and the Arkansas General Assembly. The task force
11 shall include:

12 (1) the director of the Department of Education or his designee;

13 (2) the director of the Department of Higher Education or his
14 designee;

15 (3) the director of the Department of Health or his designee;

16 (4) the director of the Department of Human Services or his
17 designee;

18 (5) the director of the Employment Security Division or his
19 designee;

20 (6) the director of the Vocational-Technical Division of the
21 Department of Education or his designee;

22 (7) the director of the Department of Corrections or his
23 designee;

24 (8) the Governor or his designee;

25 (9) two (2) members of the Arkansas House of Representatives, who
26 shall be appointed by the Speaker;

27 (10) two (2) members of the Arkansas Senate, who shall be
28 appointed by the Senate Pro Tempore; and

29 (11) six (6) citizens of this state, who shall be appointed by
30 the Governor, representing various areas of this state who have demonstrated
31 abilities, ideas or experience in the enhancement of self worth, personal and
32 social responsibility and good citizenship with consideration given to
33 appointing a welfare recipient, an ex-convict or a victim of a violent crime.

34 (c) Members shall serve without compensation but shall receive mileage
35 and expenses if overnight travel is required.

1 (d) In the event of a vacancy on the task force, a new member shall be
2 appointed by the original appointing authority in accordance with the
3 requirements applicable to an original appointment.

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5 SECTION 4. Each appointing authority at the state level shall make the
6 required appointments to the task force within thirty (30) days of the
7 effective date of this act. The Governor or his designee shall call the first
8 meeting of the task force within sixty (60) days of the effective date of this
9 act. A second meeting of this Task Force, inviting interested county
10 representatives, shall be held within ninety (90) days of the effective date
11 of this act.

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13 SECTION 5. The purpose of the task force shall be to:

14 (1) promote public awareness of the findings, policies and programs
15 most likely to be effective in building or restoring self worth;

16 (2) encourage in each county the formation of a volunteer task force to
17 develop and initiate a program for promoting personal and social
18 responsibility and self worth for the area;

19 (3) keep abreast of new research in the area;

20 (4) monitor results of the area task forces and report to the Arkansas
21 General Assembly prior to the 1993 Regular Session on the progress made and
22 recommendations for the future;

23 (5) generate an effort to inform the public of the relationship between
24 self worth and the state's major social problems and how self worth can be
25 nurtured, harmed and rebuilt and to identify ways the public can become
26 involved in the solution;

27 (6) survey government and other public institutions, including
28 government agencies, school and public assistance programs to determine
29 whether the manner in which they treat people serves to dehumanize persons and
30 adversely affect their healthy self worth;

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

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

1 (9) work with the Department of Education, Department of Higher
2 Education, Vocational-Technical Education Division of the Department of
3 Education, Department of Health, Department of Human Services, Department of
4 Corrections, and other entities which the task force may identify that impact
5 self worth in Arkansans to formulate policy to recommend to the General
6 Assembly and the Governor to promote personal and social responsibility and
7 self worth.

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9 SECTION 6. The task force may solicit, accept and dispose of any
10 private or public funds in the form of donations of money, grants, property,
11 or personal services from individuals, corporations and governments for the
12 purposes of the task force.

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14 SECTION 7. In order to aid the state task force and the county task
15 forces, there shall be three (3) staff members to be hired by the Governor, as
16 a part of the Governor's staff, consisting of two (2) professional staff and
17 one (1) clerical position. The staff shall:

18 (1) provide staff support for the task force;

19 (2) compile updated research concerning the relationship between self
20 worth and alcohol and drug abuse, crime, violence, teen pregnancy, teen
21 suicide, child abuse, high school dropouts, chronic welfare dependency,
22 recidivism, and the failure of children to achieve up to their potential in
23 school;

24 (3) research and compile programmatic practices available to build
25 personal and social responsibility and self worth;

26 (4) research and maintain information on early intervention programs
27 for preschool students;

28 (5) provide such information to the state and county task forces;

29 (6) assist counties in organizing their task forces;

30 (7) gather information on how state agencies may be dehumanizing and
31 destroying the self worth of those they serve;

32 (8) advise state agencies on ways to promote self worth in their staff
33 and those they serve;

34 (9) evaluate and establish tracking mechanisms for county self worth
35 programs;

1 (10) provide information to the General Assembly and Governor on self
2 worth programs;

3 (11) provide information to the general public on self worth.
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5 SECTION 8. All departments, commissions, boards, agencies, officers,
6 and institutions and subdivisions of this state shall cooperate with the task
7 force in carrying out the powers and purposes of this act.
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9 SECTION 9. Three (3) months prior to the convening of the 1993 Regular
10 Session, the task force shall submit a report to the General Assembly and the
11 Governor including:

12 (1) the activities of the task force;

13 (2) the findings of the task force;

14 (3) any recommendations of the task force; and

15 (4) any other information the task force considers appropriate.
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17 SECTION 10. The task force, the Governor, the General Assembly and
18 state agencies shall encourage the development of a group of volunteers in
19 each county to act as a county task force. In large or highly populated
20 areas, these task forces may break into subcommittees representing a
21 particular community. The task force shall be made up of a wide variety of
22 people representing all citizens in the county, including local school
23 districts, institutions of higher learning, service agencies, business
24 leaders, parents, and others interested in promoting personal and social
25 responsibility and self worth.
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27 SECTION 11. The county task forces shall develop a plan for instituting
28 a program in their counties to accomplish the goals as set forth in the
29 definition of self worth in Section 2. The program shall be designed to
30 include as many groups of people as possible, but should begin with parents,
31 children and teachers.
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33 SECTION 12. These county task forces shall promote the exercise of
34 responsible citizenship, so as to enable individuals to become personally
35 involved in the creation of policies, programs and environments, as will

1 enhance personal and social responsibility and self worth, and therefore,
2 responsible citizenship in their counties.

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4 SECTION 13. The State Board of Education shall adopt as one of its
5 goals the promotion of personal and social responsibility and self worth. The
6 State Board of Education shall direct the Department of Education to work with
7 the task force, the Department of Health and other state agencies as needed to
8 implement a program of personal and social responsibility and self worth.

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10 SECTION 14. The Department of Education shall require schools to
11 include in their curriculum instruction promoting personal and social
12 responsibility and self worth for all students from kindergarten through high
13 school. The Department of Education shall require a method for addressing the
14 goal of promoting personal and social responsibility and self worth to be
15 included in the district and individual school plan, required by the Education
16 Planning Act of 1983 (Ark. Code Ann. §6-15-101).

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18 SECTION 15. Each school district within a particular county shall
19 appoint a person to the county task force once established. Each school
20 district shall make the promotion of personal and social responsibility and
21 self worth a priority. The in-service curriculum of each district shall
22 include training in the promotion of personal and social responsibility and
23 self worth.

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25 SECTION 16. Each institution of higher education should adopt as one of
26 its goals the promotion of personal and social responsibility and self worth.
27 Each institution shall develop a program which will include ways to achieve
28 this among the staff and faculty, as well as the students. In particular,
29 education and training should be incorporated into the curriculum of education
30 majors, in addition to other service-type majors, such as social work. In
31 counties which have county task forces, institutions shall appoint a person to
32 serve on this task force.

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34 SECTION 17. Each vocational-technical school shall review their
35 policies and curriculum to ensure that they do not operate in a manner which

1 serves to dehumanize persons. Each vocational-technical school shall develop
2 a program to promote personal and social responsibility and self worth for
3 each institution both in the faculty and students. Vocational-technical
4 schools can play a major role in promoting self worth, particularly in non-
5 college bound students. In counties where county task forces exist, schools
6 shall appoint a person to serve on this task force.

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8 SECTION 18. State agencies shall evaluate their policies, programs and
9 staff to ensure that they do not operate in a manner which serves to
10 dehumanize persons and adversely affect their healthy self worth. State
11 agencies shall determine ways in which they, in particular their public
12 assistance programs, can be more supportive of the development and
13 perpetuation of healthy self-esteem. These goals should be incorporated into
14 the orientation and training of new employees, as well as periodic in-service
15 for existing employees. In counties which have county task forces, agencies
16 shall appoint a person to serve on this task force.

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18 SECTION 19. All provisions of this act of a general and permanent
19 nature are amendatory to the Arkansas Code of 1987 Annotated and the Arkansas
20 Code Revision Commission shall incorporate the same in the Code.

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22 SECTION 20. If any provision of this act or the application thereof to
23 any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect
24 other provisions or applications of the act which can be given effect without
25 the invalid provision or application, and to this end the provisions of this
26 act are declared to be severable.

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28 SECTION 21. All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this act are
29 hereby repealed.

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31 SECTION 22. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is hereby found and determined by the
32 Seventy-Eighth General Assembly that research has established a causal
33 relationship between a lack of self worth and crime, violence, alcohol and
34 drug abuse, welfare dependency, high school dropouts, teen pregnancy,
35 recidivism, child abuse and teen suicide; that people who possess self worth

1 are less likely to engage in these types of destructive and self-destructive
2 behavior and more likely to engage in positive behavior and be productive
3 members of society; that the creation of a task force is necessary to develop
4 plans to eliminate or reduce these social problems by enhancing self worth;
5 and that this task force needs to be created immediately in order to address
6 these problems. Therefore, an emergency is hereby declared to exist and this
7 act being necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and
8 safety shall be in full force and effect from and after its passage and
9 approval.

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