MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2021

By: Representatives Banks, Hudson

To: Corrections;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 649

AN ACT TO CREATE THE "HALFWAY HOUSE GRANT PROGRAM ACT"; TO PROVIDE A FUND FOR THE PROGRAM IN THE STATE TREASURY; TO PROVIDE THAT THE FUND SHALL BE UTILIZED BY A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION TO OFFER SUPPORT TO THE INCARCERATED WHO ARE NEAR COMPLETION OF THEIR SENTENCES; TO REQUIRE THE FUND BE UTILIZED TO IMPLEMENT CERTAIN OBJECTIVES TO ASSIST SUCH OFFENDERS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS SHALL BE THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FUND; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Halfway House Grant Program Act."

(2) There is created in the State Treasury a fund designated as the "Halfway House Grant Program Fund" that is referred to in this act as "fund."

(3) The fund shall be used solely to provide grants to a nonprofit organization that focuses on providing support to the incarcerated and the family members of the incarcerated via implementing the following objectives that the organization will attain:

(a) Obtaining a building to house offenders and hire adequate certified staff including counselors, educators and clergy members;

(b) Servicing offenders who are near completion of their sentences by enrolling the offenders into the organization's intensive rehabilitation program for a minimum of six (6) months and a maximum of eighteen (18) months where such offenders will undergo vigorous behavioral and faith based initiatives that will teach offenders how to live in society;

(c) Working closely with various local companies who are willing to hire and train individuals with criminal backgrounds as well as by having the nonprofit organization transport offenders to and from their work site;

(d) Acquiring land so that offenders may be enrolled into an agriculture work program where they would harvest crops and sell the produce they have grown; and

(e) Providing a mandatory financial responsibility program for offenders to educate such offenders on checking/savings accounts, self-employment and money management skills.

(4) The fund shall be administered by the Department of Corrections which shall promulgate reasonable regulations and rules consistent with the purposes of this act.

(5) The Department of Corrections shall be the agency authorized to accept grants, gifts, donations, bequeaths and appropriations of state and federal funds for deposit in the fund.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.