

House Bill 963

By: Representative Mangham of the 62nd

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Article 21 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,
2 relating to a brief period of quiet reflection, so as to clarify that the daily moment of quiet
3 reflection in public schools shall accommodate students who wish to exercise their freedom
4 of religion to engage in silent prayer or meditation; to provide for legislative findings; to
5 provide that students may reflect on an inspirational poem or reading, pray silently, or
6 meditate during the moment of quiet reflection; to change a provision relating to
7 student-initiated voluntary school prayer; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

8 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:**

9 **SECTION 1.**

10 The General Assembly finds that the hectic pace of today's society allows few of our
11 citizens, particularly our young citizens, to experience a daily moment of quiet reflection
12 before plunging headlong into the day's activities. The General Assembly finds that
13 requiring a moment of silence at the beginning of each day in our public schools would be
14 beneficial to our students, to be used as a moment for reflecting on the anticipated activities
15 of the day, perusing an inspirational poem or reading, or engaging in silent prayer or
16 meditation. The General Assembly further finds that a daily moment of silence would
17 accommodate students who wish to engage in silent prayer or meditation as a free exercise
18 of religion, while subjecting the freedom of each individual student to the least possible
19 pressure from the state to engage in or refrain from religious observation at school.

20 **SECTION 2.**

21 Article 21 of Chapter 2 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to a
22 brief period of quiet reflection, is amended by striking Code Section 20-2-1050, relating to
23 the brief period of quiet reflection, and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

1 "20-2-1050.

2 (a) In each public school classroom, the teacher in charge shall, at the opening of school
3 upon every school day, conduct a brief period of quiet reflection for not more than 60
4 seconds with the participation of all the pupils therein assembled.

5 (b) The moment of quiet reflection authorized by subsection (a) of this Code section is not
6 intended to be and shall not be conducted as a religious service or exercise but shall be
7 considered as an opportunity for a moment of silent reflection on the anticipated activities
8 of the day. During the course of such silent reflection, students may reflect on an
9 inspirational poem or reading or engage in silent prayer, meditation, or other contemplative
10 activity.

11 (c) The provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this Code section shall not prevent student
12 initiated voluntary school prayers at schools or school related events which are
13 ~~nonsectarian and~~ nonproselytizing in nature."

14

SECTION 3.

15 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.