

By: Representatives Wallace, Miller,
Straughter, Thornton

To: Education;
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1037

1 AN ACT TO CREATE NEW SECTION 37-143-12, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF
2 1972, TO ESTABLISH A SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEE TEACHER-SCHOLAR
3 GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE INCENTIVE SCHOLARSHIPS TO QUALIFIED
4 SCHOOL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES FOR COLLEGE COURSEWORK LEADING TO
5 TEACHER LICENSURE IF SUCH PERSONS AGREE TO TEACH IN CERTAIN AREAS
6 IN MISSISSIPPI OR IN CERTAIN SUBJECT AREAS, TO PLACE CONDITIONS ON
7 SUCH SCHOLARSHIPS AND TO PROVIDE FOR THE CONVERSION OF SUCH
8 SCHOLARSHIPS INTO LOANS IF THE GRANTEE DOES NOT MEET SUCH
9 CONDITIONS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 SECTION 1. The following shall be codified as Section
12 37-143-12, Mississippi Code of 1972:

13 37-143-12. (1) The Legislature finds that there continues
14 to exist a critical shortage of teachers in many areas and
15 communities of Mississippi. It is declared to be the intention of
16 the Legislature to attract the highest calibre students into the
17 teaching profession and to retain qualified school district
18 employees by awarding incentive grants to persons declaring an
19 intention to serve in the teaching field and who actually render
20 service to the state while possessing a regular teaching license
21 with an appropriate major or subject area of concentration.

22 (2) There is established the "School District Employee
23 Teacher-Scholar Grant Fund."

24 (3) To the extent of appropriations available, residents of
25 the State of Mississippi who are presently employed by a public
26 school district and have graduated from an accredited program of
27 secondary education and who have expressed in writing a present
28 intention to teach in (a) a critical teacher shortage area or
29 subject area of concentration, or (b) a critical teacher shortage

30 geographic section of the state, shall be eligible for a grant
31 under this program to be applied to the costs of their college
32 education.

33 (4) A freshman establishing initial eligibility shall be
34 eligible for a maximum of four (4) annual grants. Upper-class
35 students shall be eligible for grants for each remaining year of
36 study. To maintain eligibility, a student shall be enrolled in at
37 least six (6) credit hours per semester.

38 (5) The annual grant shall be Fifteen Thousand Dollars
39 (\$15,000.00).

40 (6) The repayment of the grants to persons is conditioned
41 upon the grantees actually rendering service as licensed teachers
42 in: (a) a critical teacher shortage area or subject area of
43 concentration; or (b) a critical teacher shortage geographic area
44 section of the state, as approved by the State Board of Education
45 in Mississippi designated by the State Board of Education. For
46 each year of full-time teaching, as defined for these purposes by
47 the State Board of Education, repayment of twenty-five percent
48 (25%) of the total amounts of grants shall be forgiven.

49 (7) The State Board of Education shall promulgate guidelines
50 under which local superintendents of schools shall allow persons
51 accepted into the grant program to continue their employment
52 responsibilities with the school district under flexible working
53 hours, which, to the extent practicable, shall also enable the
54 person to attend college classes.

55 (8) In the event that the grantee fails to perform the
56 conditions provided in this section, then the grant shall be
57 converted to a loan and the grantee shall be responsible for
58 repayment of the grant. Persons failing to complete an
59 appropriate program of study shall immediately become liable to
60 the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning for
61 the sum of all outstanding loans, except in the case of a deferral
62 of debt for cause by the board, after which period of deferral,
63 study may be resumed. Persons failing to meet teaching
64 requirements in any required semester shall immediately be in
65 breach of contract and become liable to the board for the amount
66 of the corresponding loan received, with interest accruing at the

67 current Stafford Loan rate at the time the breach occurs, except
68 in the case of a deferral of debt for cause by the board, after
69 which period of deferral teaching duties required hereunder will
70 be resumed. If the claim for payment of such loan is placed in
71 the hands of an attorney of collection after default, then the
72 obligor shall be liable for an additional amount equal to a
73 reasonable attorney's fee.

74 (9) A grant or loan made pursuant to this section shall not
75 be voidable by reason of the age of the borrower at the time of
76 receiving a loan.

77 (10) Failure to pay any loan and interest that becomes due
78 shall be cause for the revocation of a person's teaching license
79 by the State Department of Education.

80 (11) All monies repaid to the Board of Trustees of State
81 Institutions of Higher Learning under this section shall be added
82 to the appropriations made for the purposes of this section, and
83 such appropriations shall not lapse.

84 (12) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
85 Learning, with the concurrence of the State Board of Education,
86 shall jointly promulgate regulations necessary for the proper
87 administration of this section.

88 (13) If insufficient funds are available for the requested
89 grants to a qualified student during any fiscal year, the Board of
90 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall make pro
91 rata reductions in the grants made to qualifying applicants.
92 Priority consideration shall be given to persons receiving
93 previous grants and participating in the program.

94 (14) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
95 Learning shall make an annual report to the Legislature. Each
96 report shall contain a complete enumeration of the board's
97 activities, grants or scholarships granted, names of persons to
98 whom granted and the institutions attended by those receiving the
99 same, the teaching location of applicants who have received their

100 education and become licensed teachers within this state as a
101 result of the grants and/or scholarships. The board shall make a
102 full report and account of receipts and expenditures for salaries
103 and expenses incurred under this section. The board shall
104 distinguish, upon its records and any published report, between
105 those recipients who have breached their contracts but with the
106 board's permission have paid their financial obligations in full,
107 and those recipients who have breached their contracts and remain
108 financially indebted to the state.

109 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from
110 and after July 1, 1999.