

By: Holland

To: Agriculture;  
Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1434

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES TO VETERINARY COLLEGE  
2 STUDENTS AN GRADUATES WHO AGREE TO PRACTICE IN A RURAL COUNTY OF  
3 MISSISSIPPI; TO PROVIDE DEFINITIONS; TO CREATE THE RURAL  
4 VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE PROGRAM COMMITTEE; TO ESTABLISH CRITERIA  
5 FOR ELIGIBLE PARTICIPANTS; TO PROVIDE METHODS OF ACHIEVING  
6 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE PROGRAM; TO CREATE THE RURAL  
7 VETERINARIAN INCENTIVE FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY; AND FOR RELATED  
8 PURPOSES.

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

10 SECTION 1. The following words and phrases shall have the  
11 meaning ascribed herein unless the context clearly indicates  
12 otherwise:

13 (a) "College" means The Mississippi State  
14 University College of Veterinary Medicine.

15 (b) "Committee" means the Rural Veterinarian  
16 Incentive Program Committee established by this act.

17 (c) "Eligible participant" means a person eligible  
18 to participate in the program under Section 4 of this act.

19 (d) "Fund" means the Rural Veterinarian Incentive  
20 Fund created in the State Treasury by this act.

21 (e) "Program" means the Rural Veterinarian  
22 Incentive Program established by this act.

23 (f) "Rural county" means a county with a  
24 population of less than fifty thousand (50,000).

25 (g) "University" means Mississippi State  
26 University of Agriculture and Applied Science.

27 SECTION 2. The university shall administer the program in  
28 accordance with the rules adopted by the committee.

29 SECTION 3. (1) The Rural Veterinarian Incentive Program

30 Committee consist of:

31 (a) The Chairman of the Mississippi Board of  
32 Animal Health or the chairman's designee;

33 (b) The President of the Board of Veterinary  
34 Medicine or the president's designee;

35 (c) The dean of the college;

36 (d) A veterinarian with a mixed animal practice  
37 appointed by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher  
38 Learning; and

39 (e) A veterinarian with a large animal practice  
40 appointed by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher  
41 Learning;

42 (2) The dean of the college serves as the presiding  
43 officer of the committee.

44 (3) An appointed member of the committee serves a term  
45 of two (2) years.

46 (4) The committee shall adopt rules:

47 (a) Establishing criteria to determine whether a  
48 person is an eligible participant as the committee considers  
49 reasonable, including the person's:

50 (i) minimum grade point average; and

51 (ii) financial need;

52 (b) Providing for the distribution of money from  
53 the fund for the program;

54 (c) Establishing the criteria necessary for a  
55 community or political subdivision in a rural county to qualify as  
56 a student sponsor under Section 5 of this act.

57 (d) Governing agreements of financial support  
58 between a rural sponsor and an eligible student; and

59 (e) Establishing other procedures necessary to  
60 administer the program.

61 SECTION 4. A person is eligible to participate in the  
62 program only if the person:

63 (a) Is enrolled as a student of the college or  
64 applies to participate in the program on or before the first  
65 anniversary of the date the person graduates from the college;

66 (b) Will receive or has received from a student  
67 loan at least fifty percent (50%) of the funds for tuition and  
68 fees for one (1) or more academic years while enrolled in the  
69 college; and

70 (c) Meets any additional qualifications adopted by  
71 the committee.

72 SECTION 5. (1) A community or political subdivision located  
73 in a rural county that qualifies under the rules of the committee  
74 may become a sponsor of an eligible participant and may provide  
75 financial support to the eligible participant under the program.

76 (2) To participate as a sponsor in the program, the  
77 community or political subdivision must enter into an agreement  
78 with the eligible participant to provide financial support to the  
79 eligible participant in an amount not less than the tuition and  
80 fees required for a full academic year for a student enrolled in  
81 the college in exchange for the eligible participant's agreement  
82 to practice veterinary medicine in the sponsoring community or  
83 political subdivision.

84 (3) Financial support under this section:

85 (a) May be provided in whole or part by a grant,  
86 scholarship or funds provided by a private foundation; and

87 (b) Shall be deposited in the fund for  
88 distribution to the eligible participant by the university.

89 SECTION 6. (1) To participate in the program, and eligible  
90 participant must enter into an agreement with the university to  
91 practice veterinary medicine in a rural county for one (1)  
92 calendar year for each academic year for which the student  
93 receives financial support under the program.

94 (2) The financial support received by an eligible  
95 participant under this section must be used to retire student loan

96 debt or to pay tuition and fees to the university while the  
97 eligible participant is enrolled in the college.

98 (3) Financial support from the fund shall be awarded in  
99 the form of grants.

100 SECTION 7. (1) The Rural Veterinarian Incentive Fund is  
101 created as a special fund in the State Treasury.

102 (2) The fund consists of any legislative appropriations  
103 for purposes of the program, gifts, grants, donations, the market  
104 value of in-kind contributions and other sources of revenue  
105 deposited to the credit of the fund by the university.

106 (3) The fund shall be administered by the university in  
107 accordance with rules adopted by the committee. The university  
108 may use a portion of the money deposited to the credit of the  
109 fund, not to exceed ten percent (10%) of that amount, for the  
110 administration of the program.

111 SECTION 8. This act shall take effect and be in force from  
112 and after July 1, 2000.