

By: Representative Fleming

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 92

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR PERSONS HAVING
2 A DEBILITATING DISEASE; TO REQUIRE SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS TO
3 INCLUDE MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING THE APPLICANT'S DEBILITY;
4 TO PROVIDE THAT SCHOLARSHIPS MAY BE AWARDED TO BOTH FULL-TIME AND
5 PART-TIME STUDENTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE
6 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING SHALL BE THE ADMINISTERING AGENCY
7 OF THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO ESTABLISH THE DEBILITATING DISEASE
8 SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is created a special scholarship
11 program for persons having a debilitating disease. The purpose of
12 the program is to help eligible residents of Mississippi to obtain
13 a postsecondary certificate or degree at a state institution of
14 higher learning or a public community or junior college in
15 Mississippi when such persons, because of their debility,
16 otherwise might not be able to further their education.

17 (2) Any legal resident of the state who has a debilitating
18 disease and who is enrolled in or accepted for enrollment at a
19 state institution of higher learning or a public community or
20 junior college in Mississippi may apply for a scholarship under
21 this program. An application must be accompanied by written
22 medical documentation from a licensed physician describing the
23 nature of the applicant's debilitating disease, the estimated
24 extent of the applicant's debility, a prognosis for recovery and
25 any other information that may be required pursuant to rules or
26 regulations established under subsection (6) of this section.

27 (3) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
28 Learning shall establish the maximum annual award that may be made
29 under the scholarship program, which may not exceed the cost of
30 tuition at the institution or college at which the student is



31 enrolled. Both full-time and part-time students may apply for
32 awards under the program. Students enrolling on a full-time basis
33 may receive a maximum of four (4) annual awards or, in those
34 instances when a degree program requires five (5) years for
35 completion, five (5) annual awards. The number of awards which
36 may be made to a student attending school on a part-time basis may
37 not exceed the length of time required to complete the associate
38 or baccalaureate degree or certificate program toward which the
39 student is working. A person who has a baccalaureate degree is
40 not eligible for a scholarship under the program, and any person
41 who has an associate degree may receive awards only in furtherance
42 of a baccalaureate degree.

43 (4) For the purpose of establishing the eligibility of
44 applicants for scholarships under the program, the Board of
45 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning jointly with the
46 State Board for Community and Junior Colleges shall define the
47 term "debilitating disease" and shall establish objective criteria
48 for determining whether an applicant's physical debility qualifies
49 the applicant for a scholarship. The definition and criteria
50 shall be included in the rules and regulations established under
51 subsection (6) of this section.

52 (5) As a condition for renewal of a scholarship, a student
53 must make steady academic progress toward a certificate or
54 associate or baccalaureate degree, as certified by the
55 institution's registrar, and must maintain a cumulative grade
56 point average of at least 2.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale at the
57 end of each term.

58 (6) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
59 Learning and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges
60 jointly shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry
61 out the purposes and intent of this section. The Board of
62 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall be the
63 administering agency of the program.



64 (7) It is the intent of the Legislature to fully fund
65 scholarships to eligible students under this program. If funds
66 are insufficient to fully fund scholarships to all eligible
67 applicants, the board shall award the scholarships to first-time
68 students on a first-come, first-served basis; however, priority
69 consideration must be given to persons previously receiving awards
70 under the program who are making steady academic progress toward
71 completion of a certificate program or associate or baccalaureate
72 degree.

73 **SECTION 2.** There is established in the State Treasury a
74 special fund to be known as the "Debilitating Disease Scholarship
75 Fund." The fund shall consist of all monies appropriated to the
76 fund by the Legislature and any gifts, grants or donations that
77 may be received from any source, public or private. Monies in the
78 fund may be used solely for the purpose of awarding scholarships
79 under the program established in Section 1 of this act. Interest
80 earned on the investment of monies in the fund must be returned
81 and deposited to the credit of the fund.

82 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
83 and after July 1, 2003.

