

By: Representative Markham

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 231

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-29, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF GRANTS UNDER THE MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT
3 TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT (MTAG) PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-29, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 37-106-29. (1) There is established the Mississippi
8 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program for college or
9 university freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors, to be
10 administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
11 Assistance Board established under Section 37-106-9, which shall
12 set the dates and deadlines for applying for an award under this
13 section. The board shall establish such rules and regulations as
14 it deems necessary and proper to carry out the purposes and intent
15 of this section.

16 (2) The college or university shall approve grants to
17 full-time freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior Mississippi
18 residents who meet the general requirements for student
19 eligibility as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

20 (3) Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants shall be
21 for Mississippi students from any Mississippi family whose prior
22 year adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to
23 qualify for full Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal
24 aid. Those Mississippi students receiving less than the full Pell
25 Grant award, as determined by the institution, shall receive a
26 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant in an amount not to
27 exceed the maximum Pell Grant allowable for that individual

28 student. The award shall be applied to tuition, rooms and meals,
29 books, materials and fees not to exceed One Thousand Two Hundred
30 Dollars (\$1,200.00) for junior and senior students attending state
31 institutions of higher learning in Mississippi or four-year
32 regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit colleges and
33 universities in Mississippi, and Six Hundred Dollars (\$600.00) for
34 freshmen and sophomores attending state institutions of higher
35 learning or public community or junior colleges in Mississippi, or
36 regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit two-year or
37 four-year colleges in Mississippi, which will be prorated per
38 term, semester or quarter of the academic year for costs of
39 attendance, calculated according to the formula specified in
40 subsection (8) of this section.

41 (4) The general requirements for initial eligibility of
42 students for Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants
43 consist of the following:

44 (a) Member of a Mississippi family whose prior year
45 adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to qualify
46 for Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal aid.

47 (b) Acceptance for enrollment at any state institution
48 of higher learning or public community or junior college located
49 in Mississippi, or any regionally accredited, state-approved,
50 nonprofit four- or two-year college or university located in
51 Mississippi as listed in subsection (d) of this subsection: (i) a
52 minimum grade point average of 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale after
53 seven (7) semesters certified by the high school counselor or
54 other authorized school official on the application and graduation
55 from high school verified by the institution before disbursement
56 of award and has scored fifteen (15) on the American College Test
57 Program (ACT); or (ii) has attended a home education program
58 during grade levels 9 through 12, and has scored fifteen (15) on
59 the American College Testing Program; or (iii) satisfactory
60 completion of the General Educational Development Test (GED) or

61 have successfully completed the International Baccalaureate
62 Program and has scored fifteen (15) on the American College
63 Testing Program; * * * however, * * * any student entering a
64 vocational or technical program of study, or who has
65 satisfactorily completed the General Education Development Test
66 and attends a community or junior college will not be required to
67 have a test score under the American College Testing Program
68 except those students enrolled in courses of academic study. Any
69 student currently enrolled in any qualified institution shall have
70 to only meet the same requirements as students who are applying
71 for a renewal award.

72 (c) Resident status for purposes of receiving grants
73 under this section shall be determined in the same manner as
74 resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections
75 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, with the exception of 37-103-17.

76 (d) Must attend one (1) of the following institutions
77 of higher learning: Alcorn State University, Delta State
78 University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State
79 University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley
80 State University, University of Mississippi, University of
81 Southern Mississippi, Coahoma Community College, Copiah-Lincoln
82 Community College, East Central Community College, East
83 Mississippi Community College, Hinds Community College, Holmes
84 Community College, Itawamba Community College, Jones County Junior
85 College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Delta Community
86 College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Northeast
87 Mississippi Community College, Northwest Mississippi Community
88 College, Pearl River Community College, Southwest Mississippi
89 Community College, Belhaven College, Blue Mountain College,
90 Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Rust College, Tougaloo
91 College, William Carey College, Mary Holmes College, Magnolia
92 Bible College and Wood College.

93 (5) By accepting a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance
94 Grant, the student is attesting to the accuracy, completeness and
95 correctness of information provided to demonstrate the student's
96 eligibility. Falsification of such information shall result in
97 the denial of any pending grant and revocation of any award
98 currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be
99 made. Any student knowingly making false statements in order to
100 receive a grant shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable, upon
101 conviction thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars
102 (\$10,000.00), a prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the
103 county jail, or both, and shall be required to return all
104 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants wrongfully
105 obtained.

106 (6) Eligibility for renewal of Mississippi Resident Tuition
107 Assistance Grants shall be evaluated at the end of each semester,
108 or term, of each academic year. As a condition for renewal, a
109 student shall:

110 (a) Make steady academic progress toward a certificate
111 or degree, as outlined in the school Satisfactory Academic
112 Progress Standards and certified by the institution's registrar.

113 (b) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than
114 two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters in each successive
115 academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the
116 administering agency; examples of cause may include student
117 participation in a cooperative program, internship program or
118 foreign study program. If a student fails to maintain continuous
119 enrollment, and is not granted an exception for cause by the
120 administering agency, the student is ineligible to receive the
121 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following
122 semester or trimester or term of the regular academic year.

123 (c) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least
124 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester or
125 trimester or term.

126 (7) Each student, each year, must complete a Free
127 Application for Federal Student Aid form or a Statement of
128 Certification as designed by the administering board to determine
129 his/her eligibility for a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance
130 Grant.

131 (8) (a) The amount of the Mississippi Resident Tuition
132 Assistance Grant awarded to any one (1) student, up to the maximum
133 amount provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall be the
134 difference of the student's cost of attendance at his accredited
135 college of choice and the amount of federal aid such student may
136 receive, not to supplant but to supplement the amount of any
137 federal aid awarded to the student. Cost of attendance is the
138 tuition and fees of the applicable institution plus an allowance
139 for room and meals and books and materials.

140 (b) Payment of the Mississippi Resident Tuition
141 Assistance Grant shall be made payable to the recipient and the
142 educational institution and mailed directly to the institution, to
143 be applied first to tuition.

144 (9) In order for an institution to remain eligible for its
145 students to participate in the Mississippi Resident Tuition
146 Assistance Grant Program, the institution shall comply with the
147 following requirements:

148 (a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility
149 status of each awarded student shall be made to the board for each
150 term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student
151 receives a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant.

152 (b) The institution is required to make refunds to the
153 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Fund for any funds
154 which have not been disbursed to the recipient, in the case of
155 students who have received a grant but who terminate enrollment
156 during the academic term, semester or quarter of the academic year
157 if an institution's refund policies permit a student to receive a
158 refund in such instance. The recipient shall be responsible for

159 the refund of any funds which have been disbursed by the
160 institution in such instance.

161 (c) If a student drops below full-time status but does
162 not terminate all enrollment during the term, semester or quarter
163 of the academic year no refund will be required for that term.
164 However, that student is ineligible to receive the Mississippi
165 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following term,
166 semester or quarter of the regular academic year.

167 (d) The board may conduct its own annual audits of any
168 institution participating in the Mississippi Resident Tuition
169 Assistance Grant Program. The board may suspend or revoke an
170 institution's eligibility to receive future monies under the
171 program if it finds that the institution has not complied with the
172 provisions of this section. In determining a student's initial
173 eligibility, the number of prior semesters enrolled will not be
174 counted against the student.

175 (10) No student may receive a Mississippi Resident Tuition
176 Assistance Grant for more than the equivalent semesters or
177 quarters required to complete one (1) baccalaureate degree or one
178 (1) certificate or associate degree program per institution.

179 (11) Subject to the availability of funds specifically
180 appropriated therefor, it is the intent of the Legislature to
181 fully fund grant awards to eligible students. If funds are
182 insufficient to fully fund grant awards to eligible students,
183 grant awards shall be prorated among all eligible students. No
184 student shall receive any combination of student financial aid in
185 excess of the cost of attendance as defined in subsection (8)(a).

186 (12) No student receiving a Mississippi Eminent Scholars
187 Grant as provided in Section 37-106-31 shall be eligible to
188 receive the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant pursuant
189 to Section 37-106-29 unless he is eligible for such award after
190 the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant has been considered by the
191 board when conducting an assessment of the financial resources

192 available to the student. In no case shall any student receive
193 any combination of student financial aid that would exceed the
194 cost of attendance, as defined in subsection (8)(a).

195 For purposes of this section, certificated shall mean, but
196 not be limited to, all postsecondary vocational programs in
197 eligible institutions as identified in subsection (4)(d) of this
198 section.

199 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
200 and after July 1, 2004.