

By: Representative Fleming

To: Universities and  
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 103

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM FOR PERSONS  
2 HAVING A DEBILITATING DISEASE; TO REQUIRE WAIVER APPLICATIONS TO  
3 INCLUDE MEDICAL DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING THE APPLICANT'S DEBILITY;  
4 TO PROVIDE THAT WAIVERS 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 FOR THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

71           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
72 and after July 1, 2006.