

By: Representatives Dedeaux, Buck, Evans,  
Fredericks, Ishee, Janus, Palazzo, Patterson,  
Peranich, Simpson, Upshaw

To: Public Health and Human  
Services; Universities and  
Colleges

## HOUSE BILL NO. 475

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM ADMINISTERED BY THE  
2 BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR  
3 FAMILY PROTECTION WORKERS WHO ARE EMPLOYED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF  
4 HUMAN SERVICES TO OBTAIN THE COLLEGE EDUCATION NECESSARY TO BECOME  
5 LICENSED AS SOCIAL WORKERS AND BECOME FAMILY PROTECTION  
6 SPECIALISTS FOR THE DEPARTMENT; TO PROVIDE THAT ANY PERSON WHO  
7 RECEIVES A SCHOLARSHIP UNDER THE PROGRAM, OBTAINS A COLLEGE DEGREE  
8 NECESSARY TO BECOME LICENSED AS A SOCIAL WORKER AND RECEIVES SUCH  
9 A LICENSE, SHALL RENDER SERVICE AS A FAMILY PROTECTION SPECIALIST  
10 FOR THE DEPARTMENT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN THREE YEARS FROM  
11 THE DATE THAT THE PERSON BECAME A FAMILY PROTECTION SPECIALIST; TO  
12 PROVIDE THAT ANY PERSON WHO RECEIVES A SCHOLARSHIP UNDER THE  
13 PROGRAM WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE A PROGRAM OF STUDY NECESSARY TO  
14 BECOME LICENSED AS A SOCIAL WORKER, AND ANY PERSON WHO RECEIVES A  
15 SCHOLARSHIP UNDER THE PROGRAM WHO FAILS TO COMPLETE HIS OR HER  
16 SERVICE OBLIGATION AS A FAMILY PROTECTION SPECIALIST FOR THE  
17 DEPARTMENT FOR NOT LESS THAN THREE YEARS, SHALL BECOME LIABLE  
18 IMMEDIATELY TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES FOR THE SUM OF ALL  
19 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS RECEIVED, PLUS INTEREST; AND FOR RELATED  
20 PURPOSES.

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

22 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established a scholarship program  
23 to encourage family protection workers employed by the Department  
24 of Human Services to obtain the college education necessary to  
25 become licensed as a social worker, master social worker or  
26 certified social worker and become a family protection specialist  
27 for the department.

28 (2) Any person who is employed as a family protection worker  
29 for the Department of Human Services shall be eligible for a  
30 financial scholarship from the Board of Trustees of State  
31 Institutions of Higher Learning, which shall be used to pay the  
32 costs of the person's education at a state institution of higher  
33 learning in Mississippi to obtain a college degree that is  
34 necessary to become licensed as a social worker, master social  
35 worker or certified social worker and become a family protection  
36 specialist for the department. The annual amount of a scholarship

37 award under the program shall be equal to the total cost for  
38 tuition, room and meals, books, materials and fees at the college  
39 or university in which the student is enrolled, not to exceed an  
40 amount equal to the highest total cost of tuition, room and meals,  
41 books, materials and fees assessed by a state institution of  
42 higher learning during that school year.

43 (3) Scholarship awards made under the program shall be  
44 available to both full-time and part-time students. Students  
45 enrolling on a full-time basis may receive a maximum of two (2)  
46 annual awards. The maximum number of scholarship awards that may  
47 be made to students attending school on a part-time basis, and the  
48 maximum time period for part-time students to complete the number  
49 of academic hours necessary to obtain the necessary degree, shall  
50 be established by rules and regulations of the Board of Trustees  
51 of State Institutions of Higher Learning. Scholarships under the  
52 program shall not be based upon an applicant's eligibility for  
53 financial aid. A student must maintain a "B" average or higher in  
54 his or her college coursework in order to continue receiving the  
55 scholarship.

56 (4) After a person who received a scholarship under the  
57 program has obtained a college degree that is necessary to become  
58 licensed as a social worker, master social worker or certified  
59 social worker and has received such a license from the Board of  
60 Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists,  
61 the person shall render service as a family protection specialist  
62 for the Department of Human Services for a period of not less than  
63 three (3) years from the date that the person became a family  
64 protection specialist.

65 (5) Any person who receives a scholarship under the program  
66 who fails to complete a program of study that is necessary to  
67 become licensed as a social worker, master social worker or  
68 certified social worker shall become liable immediately to the  
69 Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning for the

70 sum of all scholarship awards made to that person, plus interest  
71 accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person  
72 discontinues his or her participation in the program. Any person  
73 who fails to complete his or her service obligation as a family  
74 protection specialist for the Department of Human Services for not  
75 less than three (3) years, as required under subsection (4) of  
76 this section, shall become liable immediately to the board for the  
77 sum of all scholarship awards made to that person, plus interest  
78 accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person  
79 discontinues his or her service. If a claim for payment under  
80 this subsection is placed in the hands of an attorney for  
81 collection, the obligor shall be liable for an additional amount  
82 equal to a reasonable attorney's fee.

83 (6) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher  
84 Learning shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for the  
85 proper administration of the scholarship program established under  
86 this section. The board shall be the administering agency of the  
87 program.

88 (7) If insufficient funds are available to fully fund  
89 scholarship awards to all eligible students, the Board of Trustees  
90 of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall make the awards to  
91 first-time students on a first-come, first-served basis; however,  
92 priority consideration shall be given to persons previously  
93 receiving awards under the program.

94 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
95 and after July 1, 2007.