

By: Senator(s) Harkins

To: Appropriations;  
Universities and Colleges

SENATE BILL NO. 2581

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "MISSISSIPPI WORKS CAREER-TECH SCHOLARS  
2 PROGRAM" TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO HELP ELIGIBLE STUDENTS OF PUBLIC  
3 COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR COLLEGES WHO ARE ENROLLED IN IDENTIFIED  
4 CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS PAY THE COST OF TUITION  
5 NOT COVERED BY FEDERAL, STATE AND INSTITUTIONAL AID; TO PROVIDE  
6 STUDENT QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE PROGRAM; TO PRESCRIBE THE  
7 RESPONSIBILITIES OF STATE AGENCIES AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
8 SYSTEM IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED  
9 PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) This section shall be known as the  
12 Mississippi Works Career-Tech Scholars Program. The Mississippi  
13 Works Career-Tech Scholars Program (the program) shall serve as a  
14 Last-Dollar Scholarship Program for eligible students by providing  
15 financial assistance to students who enroll in career and  
16 technical education certificate and associate of applied science  
17 programs identified through sector analysis to meet Mississippi's  
18 workforce demands.

19 (2) In order to participate in the program, a student must:

20 (a) Be a legal resident of the State of Mississippi as  
21 provided under Section 37-103-15, if legally married;



22 (b) Be admitted to a public community or junior college  
23 and apply for and accept all offers for all available federal,  
24 state and institutional aid;

25 (c) Enroll in a minimum of fifteen (15) credit hours in  
26 an approved/identified career-tech program offered at a public  
27 community or junior college. For programs with less than fifteen  
28 (15) credit hours per semester, work-based learning (WBL) credits  
29 may be included to meet the minimum of fifteen (15) credit hour  
30 enrollment.

31 (d) For participants employed full time, the student  
32 must provide a letter from the employer to certify employment and  
33 must maintain a minimum of nine (9) credit hours each semester  
34 (may include WBL credits) in a credit-bearing approved/identified  
35 career-tech program offered at one (1) of the public community or  
36 junior colleges.

37 (3) Once admitted into the program, participating students:

38 (a) Must maintain a 2.0 grade point average each  
39 semester; and

40 (b) Participate in available work-based learning  
41 opportunities in field of study, if the business or industry  
42 provides this option.

43 (4) The program is nontransferable; thus, a student who  
44 transfers to another public community or junior college shall not  
45 be eligible for the program at the transfer institution.



46           (5) For programs eligible for the Mississippi Works  
47 Career-Tech Scholars Program, participant eligibility will end  
48 once the participant's total attempted credit hours equals the  
49 program's established and approved total credit hours.

50           (6) By September 1 of each program year, the Mississippi  
51 Community College Board, with assistance from the Postsecondary  
52 Financial Assistance Board, shall provide to the Legislature an  
53 evaluation of the program from the previous fiscal year. The  
54 report shall include the number of participants of the program,  
55 the cost associated with the program, approved career-tech  
56 programs in which participants enrolled and progress made by  
57 participants toward a degree or certificate.

58           (7) It shall be the responsibility of each of a committee of  
59 Financial Aid Directors appointed by the Postsecondary Financial  
60 Aid Board to establish a statewide application, including specific  
61 submission timeframes, for the program. Applications for the  
62 program shall include information about how students can apply for  
63 and receive federal, state and institutional aid. Additionally,  
64 program participants shall work with the community colleges'  
65 financial aid office to determine what scholarships and grants are  
66 available.

67           (8) Sector strategies and eligible career-tech programs  
68 shall be selected by:

69                 (a) The Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), in  
70 collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board and the



Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, will identify eligible occupations within sectors of interest to the state and will work with local economic developers to identify eligible occupations in sectors of importance at the local level.

(b) The State Longitudinal Data System (SLDS) will provide the information to identify the opportunity occupations.

(c) The Mississippi Development Authority will be responsible for promoting economic opportunities in eligible occupations for individuals who will engage in programs designed to help them gain the necessary academic and industry credentials along with life and practical skills to include apprenticeship programs or the Mississippi Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (MIBEST) program offered at the community and junior colleges.

(d) The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) will be responsible for coordinating workforce activities that will provide the necessary additional supporting services to succeed in the community college program and in the labor market.

(e) Each public community and junior college shall have a minimum of one (1) career-tech program approved to participate in the scholarship program.

(f) Approved programs shall be consistent with those sectors identified by the four (4) workforce development districts across the state, and the career-tech programs shall lead to high-skill, high-wage jobs.



(g) Sectors and eligible career-tech programs will be reviewed every two (2) years through a collaborative process between collaboration with the Mississippi Community College Board and the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges to ensure job availability remains current. Student participants already enrolled in an eligible program prior to the review process aforementioned will remain eligible until completion of a certificate or associate of applied science in the program provided all other eligibility requirements are met.

(9) The Mississippi Works Career-Tech Scholars Program shall be administered by the State Financial Aid Office of the Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board with the Mississippi Development Authority, the Mississippi Community College Board, and the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges establishing eligible career-tech programs at the community and junior colleges.

(10) It is the intention of the Legislature that no General Funds authorized to be expended for this purpose shall be used to replace federal funds, other state funds, local government funds, and/or institutional funds, which are being used to assist students with the cost of tuition authorized under the provisions of this act and which are withdrawn and no longer available.

(11) The program shall be contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated by the Legislature. Funds appropriated for the program shall be in addition to the appropriations received



each year to operate each community and junior college. The Mississippi Community College Board shall determine for each fall and spring semester the state's actual share of the cost of the program for each college. If legislative funding is not sufficient to meet the needs of all eligible students, the State Financial Aid Office shall reduce the allocation of funds to each college in proportion to the state's actual share of the cost of the program for each college, in order to determine the unfunded tuition cost at each college and to calculate the reduced amount to allocate and distribute to each college.

(12) Funding for the Mississippi Works Career-Tech Scholars program shall be appropriated to the State Financial Aid Office of the Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

(13) Any unfunded tuition shall be the responsibility of the student.

(14) Any funds appropriated for this act which are not expended during the fiscal year for which they were appropriated shall not lapse into the State General Fund and shall be carried forward for the same purposes during the succeeding fiscal year.

(15) Public and private entities that provide financial contributions to existing community or junior college tuition guarantee programs may and are encouraged to continue to do so.

(16) In accordance with Section 37-103-25, each community and junior college shall solely be responsible for setting tuition and fees to be paid by students.



146           (17) Students who participate in the program shall be  
147 eligible for community and junior college reimbursement purposes  
148 of state appropriations, provided they meet established admission  
149 and attendance requirements.

150           (18) Should approved career-tech programs reach enrollment  
151 capacity, priority shall be given to military personnel when  
152 possible.

153           **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
154 and after July 1, 2018.

