

By: Representatives Bennett, Arnold

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 582

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-159-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
 2 TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI CLASSIFIED SCHOOL EMPLOYEE TEACHER  
 3 CREDENTIALING AND RETENTION GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF  
 4 PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO ASSISTANT TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS  
 5 AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO EARN A BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE FOR THE  
 6 PURPOSE OF EMPLOYMENT AS LICENSED TEACHERS IN GEOGRAPHICAL  
 7 CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE AREAS AS DETERMINED BY THE STATE BOARD  
 8 OF EDUCATION; TO REQUIRE PARTICIPATING INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
 9 LEARNING TO COLLABORATE WITH THE MISSISSIPPI TEACHER CENTER TO  
 10 IDENTIFY, RECRUIT AND PLACE TEACHER EDUCATION GRADUATES IN  
 11 GEOGRAPHICAL CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE AREAS; TO REQUIRE ASSISTANT  
 12 TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS WHO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM WITH A  
 13 BACHELOR OF EDUCATION DEGREE TO COMMIT TO TEACHING IN A PUBLIC  
 14 SCHOOL IN A GEOGRAPHICAL CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE AREA FOR A  
 15 PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN THREE YEARS AFTER COMPLETION; TO PROVIDE  
 16 THAT INDIVIDUALS THAT FAIL TO COMPLETE THE PROGRAM OR COMPLY WITH  
 17 EMPLOYMENT REQUIREMENTS SHALL BE LIABLE FOR THE SUM OF ALL AWARDS  
 18 RECEIVED UNDER THE PROGRAMS, PLUS INTEREST ACCRUING AT THE CURRENT  
 19 STAFFORD LOAN RATE; TO EXTEND THE DATE OF REPEAL ON THESE PROGRAMS  
 20 UNTIL JULY 1, 2024; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

22 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-159-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
 23 amended as follows:

24 37-159-9. (1) There is established the University Assisted  
 25 Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant Program within the State  
 26 Department of Education. The purposes of the program shall be to  
 27 attract additional qualified teachers to those geographical areas



28 of the state where there exists a critical shortage of teachers  
29 and to retain the qualified teachers already serving as licensed  
30 teachers in geographical critical teacher shortage areas by making  
31 available scholarships to persons working towards a Master of  
32 Education degree or an Educational Specialist degree at an  
33 institution of higher learning whose teacher education program is  
34 approved by the State Board of Education.

35 (2) Any institution of higher learning in the State of  
36 Mississippi which offers a Master of Education degree or an  
37 Educational Specialist degree may apply to the department for  
38 participation in the program. As part of the program,  
39 participating institutions shall collaborate with the Mississippi  
40 Teacher Center to identify, recruit and place teacher education  
41 graduates, from both within the state and out of state, in school  
42 districts situated within those areas of the state where there  
43 exists a critical shortage of teachers, as designated by the State  
44 Board of Education.

45 (3) There is established the Mississippi Classified School  
46 Employee Teacher Credentialing and Retention Grant Program within  
47 the State Department of Education. The purposes of the program  
48 shall be to attract additional qualified teachers to those  
49 geographical areas of the state where there exists a critical  
50 shortage of teachers and to grow persons already serving as  
51 assistant teachers or paraprofessionals in geographical critical  
52 teacher shortage areas by making available scholarships towards



53 earning a Bachelor of Education degree at any institution of  
54 higher learning in the State of Mississippi, whether public or  
55 private, which has its teacher education program approved by the  
56 State Board of Education.

57 (4) Any institution of higher learning in the State of  
58 Mississippi, whether public or private, which offers a Bachelor  
59 of Education degree, may apply to the department for participation  
60 in the program described in subsection (3) of this section. As  
61 part of the program, participating institutions of higher learning  
62 shall collaborate with the Mississippi Teacher Center to identify,  
63 recruit and place teacher education graduates, from within the  
64 state, in school districts situated within those areas of the  
65 state where there exists a critical shortage of teachers, as  
66 designated by the State Board of Education.

67 ( \* \* \*5) The State Department of Education shall provide  
68 funds to participating institutions of higher learning for the  
69 purpose of awarding scholarships to qualified persons pursuing a  
70 Master of Education degree or an Educational Specialist degree  
71 under subsections (1) and (2) of this section, and to qualified  
72 persons pursuing a Bachelor of Education degree under subsections  
73 (3) and (4) of this section, at such institutions while rendering  
74 service to the state as a licensed teacher in a school district in  
75 a geographical area of the state where there exists a critical  
76 shortage of teachers, as approved by the State Board of Education.  
77 The financial scholarship shall be applied to the total cost for



78 tuition, books, materials and fees at the institution in which the  
79 student is enrolled, not to exceed an amount equal to the highest  
80 total cost of tuition, books, materials and fees assessed by a  
81 state institution of higher learning during that school year.  
82 Teachers who relocate within Mississippi from out of state in  
83 order to participate in the programs shall be classified as  
84 residents of the state for tuition purposes.

85 ( \* \* \*6) Students awarded financial scholarships under the  
86 University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant  
87 Program and the Mississippi Classified School Employee Teacher  
88 Credentialing and Retention Grant Program may receive such awards  
89 for a maximum of four (4) school years; however, the maximum  
90 number of awards which may be made shall not exceed the length of  
91 time required to complete the number of academic hours necessary  
92 to obtain a Bachelor of Education degree, Master of Education  
93 degree or an Educational Specialist degree, respective to the  
94 program in which the student is a participant. Financial  
95 scholarships under the programs shall not be based upon an  
96 applicant's eligibility for financial aid.

97 ( \* \* \*7) Persons relocating to a geographical area of the  
98 state where there exists a critical shortage of teachers, as  
99 approved by the State Board of Education, to participate in the  
100 University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant  
101 Program and the Mississippi Classified School Employee Teacher  
102 Credentialing and Retention Grant Program shall be eligible for



103 reimbursement for their moving expenses to the critical teacher  
104 shortage area from the State Board of Education. The State Board  
105 of Education shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary for  
106 the administration of the relocation expense reimbursement  
107 component of the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and  
108 Retention Grant Program and the Mississippi Classified School  
109 Employee Teacher Credentialing and Retention Grant Program.

110 ( \* \* \*8) Subject to the availability of funds, the State  
111 Board of Education may provide for professional development and  
112 support services as may be necessary for the retention of teachers  
113 participating in the programs in those geographical areas of the  
114 state where there exists a critical shortage of teachers.

115 ( \* \* \*9) Any person participating in the programs who fails  
116 to complete a program of study that will enable that person to  
117 obtain a Bachelor of Education degree, Master of Education degree  
118 or Educational Specialist degree shall become liable immediately  
119 to the State Board of Education for the sum of all awards made to  
120 that person under the programs, plus interest accruing at the  
121 current Stafford Loan rate at the time the person abrogates his  
122 participation in the programs.

123 ( \* \* \*10) (a) As a condition for participation in the  
124 programs, a teacher, assistant teacher or paraprofessional shall  
125 agree to employment as a licensed teacher in a school district  
126 located in a geographical area of the state where there exists a



127 critical shortage of teachers, as designated by the State Board of  
128 Education \* \* \*:

129 (i) For licensed teachers, for a period of not  
130 less than three (3) years, which shall include those years of  
131 service rendered while obtaining the Master of Education degree or  
132 Educational Specialist degree;

133 (ii) For assistant teachers and paraprofessionals,  
134 for a period of not less than three (3) years after obtaining the  
135 Bachelor of Education degree \* \* \*; and

136 (iii) \* \* \* For any person who obtained a  
137 baccalaureate degree in education with a financial scholarship  
138 under the Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program and who  
139 entered the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention  
140 Grant Program before rendering service as a teacher, the period of  
141 employment for the purposes of this subsection shall be two (2)  
142 years, in addition to the employment commitment required under the  
143 Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program.

144 (b) Service rendered by a participant as a licensed  
145 teacher in a school district in a geographical critical teacher  
146 shortage area before that teacher becomes a participant in the  
147 program may not be considered to fulfill the employment commitment  
148 required under this subsection. Any person failing to comply with  
149 this employment commitment in any required school year shall  
150 immediately be in breach of contract and become liable immediately  
151 to the State Department of Education for the sum of all



152 scholarships awarded and relocation expenses granted to that  
153 person, less one-third (1/3) of the amount of that sum for each  
154 year that service was rendered, or for those persons whose  
155 required period of employment is two (2) years, less one-half  
156 (1/2) of the amount of that sum for each year that service was  
157 rendered, plus interest accruing at the current Stafford Loan rate  
158 at the time the breach occurs, except in the case of a deferral  
159 for cause by the State Board of Education when there is no  
160 employment position immediately available upon the teacher's  
161 obtaining of the Bachelor of Education degree, Master of Education  
162 degree or Educational Specialist degree. After the period of such  
163 deferral, the person shall begin or resume the required teaching  
164 duties or shall become liable to the board under this subsection.  
165 If a claim for repayment under this subsection is placed in the  
166 hands of an attorney for collection after default, then the  
167 obligor shall be liable for an additional amount equal to a  
168 reasonable attorney's fee.

169 ( \* \* \*11) All funds received by the State Department of  
170 Education from the repayment of scholarship awards and relocation  
171 expenses by program participants shall be deposited in the  
172 Mississippi Critical Teacher Shortage Fund.

173 ( \* \* \*12) The State Board of Education shall promulgate  
174 rules and regulations necessary for the proper administration of  
175 the University Assisted Teacher Recruitment and Retention Grant



176 Program and the Mississippi Classified School Employee Teacher  
177 Credentialing and Retention Grant Program.

178 This section shall stand repealed on July 1, \* \* \* 2024.

179 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
180 and after July 1, 2019.

