

By: Representative Turner

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 161

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-55, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO EXTEND THE DATE OF THE REPEALER ON THE CRITICAL NEEDS TEACHER
3 FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

5 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-55, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
6 amended as follows:

7 37-106-55. (1) There is established the "Critical Needs
8 Teacher Forgivable Loan Program," the purpose of which is to
9 attract qualified teachers to those geographical areas of the
10 state and those subject areas of the curriculum where there exists
11 a critical shortage of teachers by awarding forgivable loans to
12 persons declaring an intention to serve in the teaching field who
13 actually render service to the state while possessing an
14 appropriate teaching license.

15 (2) Individuals shall not be eligible to enroll in the
16 Critical Needs Teacher Scholarship Program after the 2014-2015
17 academic year, and in subsequent years individuals are encouraged
18 to apply to the Teaching Fellows Program established in Section



37-106-77. Any individual who is enrolled in or accepted for enrollment at a teacher education program approved by the State Board of Education or other program at a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning in the State of Mississippi and has a passing score on the Praxis I Basic Skills Test who expresses in writing an intention to teach in a geographical area of the state or a subject area of the public school curriculum in which there exists a critical shortage of teachers, as designated by the State Board of Education, shall be eligible for a forgivable loan to be applied toward the costs of the individual's college education. The annual amount of the award shall be equal to the total cost for tuition, room and meals, books, materials and fees at the college or university in which the student is enrolled, not to exceed an amount equal to the highest total cost of tuition, room and meals, books, materials and fees assessed by a state institution of higher learning during that school year. Awards made to nonresidents of the state shall not include any amount assessed by the college or university for out-of-state tuition.

(3) Awards granted under the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall be available to both full-time and part-time students. Students enrolling on a full-time basis may receive a maximum of two (2) annual awards. The maximum number of awards that may be made to students attending school on a part-time basis, and the maximum time period for part-time



students to complete the number of academic hours necessary to obtain a baccalaureate degree in education, shall be established by rules and regulations promulgated by the board. Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loans shall not be based upon an applicant's financial need.

(4) Awards granted under the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program shall be made available to nontraditional licensed teachers showing a documented need for student loan repayment and employed in those school districts designated by the State Board of Education as a geographical area of the state or in a subject area of the curriculum in which there is a critical shortage of teachers. The maximum annual amount of this repayment should not exceed Three Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) and the maximum time period for repayment shall be no more than four (4) years.

(5) Except in those cases where employment positions may not be available upon completion of licensure requirements, at the beginning of the first school year in which a recipient of a Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan is eligible for employment as a licensed teacher or a nontraditional teacher intern pursuant to Section 37-3-2(6)(b), that person shall begin to render service as a licensed teacher or nontraditional teacher intern in a public school district in a geographical area of the state or a subject area of the curriculum where there is a critical shortage of teachers, as approved by the State Board of Education.



69 (6) Failure to repay any loan and interest that becomes due
70 shall be cause for the revocation of a person's teaching license
71 by the State Board of Education.

72 (7) Repayment and conversion terms shall be the same as
73 those outlined in Section 37-106-53.

74 (8) The board shall promulgate rules and regulations
75 necessary for the proper administration of the Critical Needs
76 Teacher Forgivable Loan Program.

77 (9) The State Board of Education shall compile * * *, in
78 consultation with the board, and submit an annual report with
79 findings and recommendations to the legislative committees on
80 education by December 1 * * * on the following:

81 (a) The number of participants in the Critical Needs
82 Teacher Forgivable Loan Program, by institution and by freshman,
83 sophomore, junior and senior level;

84 (b) The number of nontraditional teacher license
85 program participants;

86 (c) The number of individuals who completed the
87 Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan Program and the school
88 district in which they are employed;

89 (d) The number of individuals who are in default of
90 their obligation under the Critical Needs Teacher Forgivable Loan
91 Program and the status of their obligation;



92 (e) The number of participants in the program who have
93 successfully completed the Praxis examination in their junior
94 year; and

95 (f) The number of noneducation majors participating in
96 the program.

97 (10) Where local school districts exhibit financial need,
98 the State Department of Education may, subject to the availability
99 of funds specifically appropriated therefor by the Legislature,
100 provide financial assistance for the recruitment of certified
101 teachers in an amount not to exceed Seventy-five Thousand Dollars
102 (\$75,000.00) annually.

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

104 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
105 and after July 1, 2021.

