REPORT OF CONFERENCE COMMITTEE

MR. SPEAKER AND MR. PRESIDENT:

We, the undersigned conferees, have had under consideration the amendments to the following entitled BILL:

H. B. No. 1179: William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan Repayment Program; create.

We, therefore, respectfully submit the following report and recommendation:

1. That the Senate recede from its Amendment No. 1.
2. That the House and Senate adopt the following amendment:

Amend by striking all after the enacting clause and inserting in lieu thereof the following:

SECTION 1. The following shall be codified as Section 37-106-36, Mississippi Code of 1972:

37-106-36. (1) There is established the "William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan Repayment Program."

(2) Subject to the availability of funds, an eligible applicant for an initial award must have:

(a) Graduated from a baccalaureate degree-granting institution of higher learning which is regionally accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or a comparable accreditation body;

(b) Signed a contract as a full-time first-year teacher in a public school district in Mississippi;

(c) Obtained a standard five-year license. Persons with emergency licenses shall not be eligible applicants; and
(d) Outstanding qualifying undergraduate educational loans, which may include the principal, interest and related expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of government and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for undergraduate educational expense.

(3) Persons who have received funds from other forgivable loan programs established for teachers under Mississippi law, or who are presently in default or delinquent on any federal, state, local or commercial qualifying educational loan, shall not be eligible for this program.

(4) Initial recipients shall be selected on a first-come, first-served basis of all eligible applicants, which shall be limited to only one hundred fifty (150) individuals receiving scholarship funds. In the second and subsequent years of an applicant's continued eligibility, priority consideration shall first be given to renewal applicants. In any given year only one hundred fifty (150) new applicants shall be eligible to receive funds under the program.

(5) Among first-time, first-year teacher recipients, priority consideration shall be given to persons who are teaching in a public school district designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area by the State Board of Education.

(6) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to teach in a public school district that is not designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:
(a) One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($1,500.00) for the first year of teaching;

(b) Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500.00) for the second year of teaching; and

(c) Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($3,500.00) for the third year of teaching.

(7) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to teach in a public school district that is designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

(a) Four Thousand Dollars ($4,000.00) for the first year of teaching;

(b) Five Thousand Dollars ($5,000.00) for the second year of teaching, provided the recipient continues to teach in the same public school district or another public school district designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of Education; and

(c) Six Thousand Dollars ($6,000.00) for the third year of teaching, provided the recipient continues to teach in the same public school district or another public school district designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of Education.

(8) A first-year recipient who moves to another public school district shall be eligible to receive an award based on the amount allowed under the program in the new district where the teacher is employed.
(9) Awards shall be granted on a year-to-year basis, and recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.

(10) Awards shall be paid annually, after the expiration of the one-year teaching contract for which the award was granted, to the recipient's lender or loan service provider, and shall be applied to the outstanding balance. Monies paid on the recipient's behalf toward qualifying undergraduate educational loans prior to receiving payment of the award shall not be eligible for repayment through the program.

(11) During the teaching year for which the award is granted, a recipient must at all times keep the State Financial Aid Board informed of any changes to the recipient's current contact information and employment status.

(12) Recipients who fail to maintain a standard license or fail to fulfill the one-year teaching contract on which the award was based shall forfeit any right to the award.

(13) The State Financial Aid Board, in collaboration with the State Board of Education, shall track recipients of an award under this program through their fifth teaching year, unless the recipient shall leave teaching in a public school district at an earlier date. Data collected shall include recipients' undergraduate institution, school district, subject area/grade level in teaching and any other pertinent information necessary to determine the efficacy of the program in retaining teachers in their first three (3) years of teaching.
(14) The State Financial Aid Board shall promulgate regulations necessary for the proper administration of this section.

(15) There is established in the State Treasury a special fund to be designated the "William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Loan Repayment Program Fund," into which shall be deposited those funds appropriated by the Legislature, and any other funds that may be made available, for the purpose of implementing the loan repayment program established herein. Money in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the General Fund, and interest earned on any amounts deposited into the fund shall be credited to the special fund.

(16) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2024.

SECTION 2. Section 37-106-35, Mississippi Code of 1972, which creates the Assistant Teacher Forgivable Loan Program, is repealed.

SECTION 3. Section 37-106-37, Mississippi Code of 1972, which creates the Teacher Education Scholars Forgivable Loan Program, is repealed.

SECTION 4. Section 37-106-57, Mississippi Code of 1972, which creates the William F. Winter Teacher Forgivable Loan Program, is repealed.

SECTION 5. Section 37-106-77, Mississippi Code of 1972, which creates the Mississippi Teaching Fellows Forgivable Loan Program, is repealed.
SECTION 6. Section 37-106-79, Mississippi Code of 1972, which creates the Teacher Education Alternate Route Certification Scholars Program, is repealed.

SECTION 7. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2021.

Further, amend by striking the title in its entirety and inserting in lieu thereof the following:


CONFEEES FOR THE HOUSE

X (SIGNED) Bennett
X (SIGNED) McCarty
X (SIGNED) Felsher

CONFEEES FOR THE SENATE

X (SIGNED) DeBar
X (SIGNED) Blount
X (SIGNED) McMahan