

By: Representative Bennett

To: Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1167

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "MISSISSIPPI CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES  
 2 SOCIAL WORK LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM" TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE  
 3 STATE FINANCIAL AID BOARD; TO PROVIDE FOR THE QUALIFICATIONS FOR  
 4 APPLICANTS UNDER THE LOAN PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE AWARD AMOUNTS FOR  
 5 RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE SIGNED A CONTRACT TO WORK IN A SERVICE AREA  
 6 THAT IS NOT DESIGNATED AS A GEOGRAPHICAL CRITICAL TEACHER SHORTAGE  
 7 AREA; TO PROVIDE AWARD AMOUNTS FOR RECIPIENTS WHO HAVE SIGNED A  
 8 CONTRACT TO WORK IN A SERVICE AREA THAT IS DESIGNATED AS A  
 9 GEOGRAPHICAL CRITICAL SOCIAL WORKER SHORTAGE AREA; TO REQUIRE A  
 10 RECIPIENT TO KEEP THE BOARD INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES TO HIS OR HER  
 11 CONTACT INFORMATION AND EMPLOYMENT STATUS DURING THE YEAR FOR  
 12 WHICH THE AWARD IS GRANTED; TO PROVIDE THAT RECIPIENTS WHO FAIL TO  
 13 MAINTAIN A SOCIAL WORK LICENSE OR FAIL TO FULFILL THE ONE-YEAR  
 14 CONTRACT ON WHICH THE AWARD WAS BASED SHALL FORFEIT ANY RIGHT TO  
 15 THE AWARD; TO REQUIRE THE BOARD, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE  
 16 DEPARTMENT OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES, TO TRACK CERTAIN DATA OF  
 17 RECIPIENTS THROUGH THEIR FIFTH SOCIAL WORK YEAR, UNLESS THE  
 18 RECIPIENT LEAVES THE DEPARTMENT AT AN EARLIER DATE; AND FOR  
 19 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

21 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the "Mississippi Child  
 22 Protection Services Social Work Loan Repayment Program."

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

25 (a) Graduated from a baccalaureate or masters  
 26 degree-granting institution of higher learning which is regionally



27 accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools  
28 (SACS) or a comparable accreditation body;

29 (b) Signed a contract as a full-time social worker with  
30 the Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services; and

31 (c) Outstanding qualifying undergraduate educational  
32 loans, which may include the principal, interest and related  
33 expenses such as the required interest premium on the unpaid  
34 balances of government and commercial loans obtained by the  
35 recipient for undergraduate or graduate educational expense.

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

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

49 (5) Among first-time, first-year recipients, priority  
50 consideration shall be given to persons who are in a service area



51 designated as a geographical critical teacher shortage area by  
52 MDCPS.

53 (6) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to work  
54 in a service area that is not designated as a geographical  
55 critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

56 (a) One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for  
57 the first year of direct care social work;

58 (b) Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for  
59 the second year of direct care social work; and

60 (c) Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500.00) for  
61 the third year of direct care social work.

62 (7) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract to work  
63 in a service area that is designated as a geographical critical  
64 social worker shortage area shall be as follows:

65 (a) Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) for the first  
66 year of direct care social work;

67 (b) Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for the second  
68 year of direct care social work, provided the recipient continues  
69 to work as a direct care social worker in the same service area or  
70 another service area designated a geographical shortage area by  
71 the State Board of Education; and

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



76 Education.

77 (8) A first-year recipient who moves to another service area  
78 shall be eligible to receive an award based on the amount allowed  
79 under the program in the new service area where the social worker  
80 is employed.

81 (9) Awards shall be granted on a year-to-year basis, and  
82 recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.

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

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

94 (12) Recipients who fail to maintain a social work license  
95 or fail to fulfill the one-year contract on which the award was  
96 based shall forfeit any right to the award.

97 (13) The State Financial Aid Board, in collaboration with  
98 the MDCPS, shall track recipients of an award under this program  
99 through their fifth social work year, unless the recipient shall  
100 leave MDCPS at an earlier date. Data collected shall include



101 recipients undergraduate/graduate institution, service area and  
102 any other pertinent information necessary to determine the  
103 efficacy of the program in retaining social workers in their first  
104 three (3) years after licensure as a social worker.

105 (14) The State Financial Aid Board shall promulgate  
106 regulations necessary for the proper administration of this  
107 section.

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

109 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
110 and after July 1, 2022.

