

By: Representative Steverson

To: Public Health and Human Services

HOUSE BILL NO. 557

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-146-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS ADMITTED ANNUALLY TO THE  
3 MISSISSIPPI RURAL DENTIST SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FROM THREE TO SIX;  
4 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-146-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
7 amended as follows:

8 37-146-7. **Identification and recruitment of undergraduate**  
9 **participants; designation of underserved or rural area; applicant**  
10 **qualifications; maximum number of new admissions per year. (1)**

11 The commission shall develop and implement policies and procedures  
12 designed to recruit, identify and enroll undergraduate students  
13 who demonstrate necessary interest, commitment, aptitude and  
14 academic achievement to pursue careers as dentists in rural or  
15 dentally underserved areas of Mississippi, and to develop and  
16 implement the programs designed to foster successful entry of  
17 participants into dental school, completion of dental school, and  
18 establishment and maintenance of a career in dentistry in a rural  
19 or underserved area of Mississippi.



20 (2) The commission shall have the authority through use of  
21 generally applicable definitions, to designate an area of the  
22 state as underserved or rural.

23 (3) The commission, in conjunction with the University of  
24 Mississippi Medical Center, shall have the authority to provide  
25 students selected for scholarship funding with faculty mentors and  
26 other programs designed to enhance the students' likelihood of  
27 admission to the dental school. The commission and the University  
28 of Mississippi Medical Center will develop coursework that will  
29 help provide scholarship students with the skills necessary for  
30 sustained and successful dental practice in rural Mississippi.

31 (4) Each applicant for admission to the program must submit  
32 an application to the commission that conforms to requirements  
33 established by the commission.

34 (5) In selecting participants for the program, the board may  
35 only accept an applicant if his or her academic record and other  
36 characteristics, if given consideration by the University of  
37 Mississippi School of Dentistry Admissions Committee, would be  
38 considered credible and competitive.

39 (6) An applicant for the program may be admitted only upon a  
40 majority vote of the members of the commission.

41 (7) Up to \* \* \* six (6) students will be admitted to the  
42 Mississippi Rural Dentists Scholarship Program each year.

43 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
44 and after July 1, 2023.

