

By: Representatives Carpenter, Arnold,
Crawford, Stamps, Summers

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1207

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE PARAMEDICS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
 2 SCHOLARSHIP GRANT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE
 3 USED BY THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, WITH THE MISSISSIPPI
 4 DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY ACTING AS THE FISCAL AGENT, FOR
 5 THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDING FOR GRANTS TO COVER THE FULL COST
 6 OF TUITION, FEES, BOOKS AND ANY REQUIRED UNIFORMS FOR QUALIFIED
 7 APPLICANTS TO ATTEND AN ACCREDITED PARAMEDIC PROGRAM AND TO
 8 REIMBURSE THE COST OF A QUALIFIED APPLICANT'S FEE FOR THE
 9 SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTRY PARAMEDIC COGNITIVE
 10 AND PSYCHOMOTOR EXAMINATIONS; TO PROVIDE HOW AN APPLICANT MAY
 11 QUALIFY FOR A GRANT; TO PROVIDE THAT THE RECIPIENT OF A GRANT
 12 SHALL COMMIT TO SERVING AS A PARAMEDIC FOR THREE CONTINUOUS YEARS
 13 IN THE STATE; TO PROVIDE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; AND FOR
 14 RELATED PURPOSES.

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

16 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and cited as the
 17 "Paramedics Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Grant Program
 18 Act."

19 **SECTION 2.** (1) The Legislature finds the following:

20 (a) The public health crisis related to COVID-19
 21 resulted in a general disruption in the Mississippi economy and
 22 workforce, particularly in the healthcare industry.



23 (b) COVID-19 and the closing of or reduction in
24 services at rural hospitals created an unprecedented demand on
25 emergency medical response providers.

26 (c) Consequently, the number of paramedics decreased in
27 the State of Mississippi by approximately nineteen percent (19%).

28 (d) The lack of paramedics directly impacts all
29 Mississippians ability to rely on quality emergency care.

30 (2) Therefore, the intent of the Legislature is:

31 (a) To provide funding to the Office of Workforce
32 Development to establish a grant program for the purposes outlined
33 herein.

34 (b) To provide funding for grants to cover the full
35 cost of tuition, fees, books and any required uniforms for
36 qualified applicants to attend an accredited paramedic program.

37 (c) To provide funding for grants to reimburse the cost
38 of a qualified applicant's fee for the successful completion of
39 the National Registry Paramedic cognitive and psychomotor
40 examinations.

41 (d) To gauge the effectiveness of this program by
42 gathering data related to the participation and employment
43 outcomes in order to replicate successful efforts in future
44 workforce development programs.

45 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established the Paramedics
46 Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Grant Program ("the
47 program"). The grant program shall be used by the Office of



48 Workforce Development, with the Mississippi Department of
49 Employment Security acting as the fiscal agent, for the purpose of
50 providing funding for grants to cover the full cost of tuition,
51 fees, books and any required uniforms for qualified applicants to
52 attend an accredited paramedic program and to reimburse the cost
53 of a qualified applicant's fee for the successful completion of
54 the National Registry Paramedic cognitive and psychomotor
55 examinations. The grant program shall be funded from monies
56 appropriated by the Legislature for that purpose.

57 (2) For the purposes of this act, a "paramedic" means a
58 certified healthcare professional who specializes in providing
59 emergency medical treatment to people who are injured or ill,
60 typically in a setting outside of a hospital.

61 (3) The Office of Workforce Development shall prescribe the
62 terms and conditions of grants awarded under the program. To
63 qualify for a grant under this program, an applicant must:

64 (a) Be a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT);

65 (b) Have the necessary requisites for an accredited
66 paramedic program;

67 (c) Commit to locate in the State of Mississippi for a
68 minimum of three (3) years; and

69 (d) Meet any other conditions for receipt as prescribed
70 by the Office of Workforce Development.



71 (4) The Office of Workforce Development may use a maximum of
72 five percent (5%) of funds appropriated for the program for the
73 administration of the program.

74 **SECTION 4.** The office shall enter into a grant contract
75 agreement with each recipient of a grant under the program that
76 incorporates the following obligations and conditions:

77 (a) The recipient of a grant shall commit to serving as
78 a paramedic for three (3) continuous years in the State of
79 Mississippi;

80 (b) If any recipient of a grant under the program does
81 not engage in serving as a paramedic in accordance with the terms
82 of this act, the recipient shall be obligated to repay the grant
83 amounts received, together with interest thereon at the maximum
84 rate allowed by Mississippi law or the federal discount rate plus
85 five percent (5%) per year, whichever is less, the interest to
86 accrue from the date that each payment of funds was received by
87 the recipient;

88 (c) No interest shall accrue and there shall be no
89 obligation to repay the principal sums accrued during any one (1)
90 period of time that the recipient involuntarily serves on active
91 duty in the United States Armed Forces; and

92 (d) Repayment of the principal with interest shall be
93 due and payable in full immediately on the occurrence of either of
94 the following events:



95 (i) Failure to remain in the State of Mississippi
96 for three (3) continuous years for any reason other than temporary
97 personal illness; or

98 (ii) Failure to serve as a paramedic on a
99 regularly sustained basis as provided in the eligibility
100 requirements of Section 3 of this act.

101 **SECTION 5.** The Office of Workforce Development shall submit
102 an annual report on the grant program to the Governor, the
103 Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
104 the Chair of the House Workforce Development Committee and the
105 Chair of the Senate Economic and Workforce Development Committee.
106 The report shall contain a detailed explanation of how the funds
107 appropriated for the program were awarded and how many paramedics
108 have participated in the grant program and their employment
109 outcomes.

110 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
111 and after July 1, 2023.

