

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

To: Universities and  
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1207  
(As Passed the House)

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; TO AUTHORIZE  
14 THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT TO ENTER INTO MOAS WITH LOCAL  
15 SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR THE PURPOSE OF ALLOWING CERTAIN HIGH SCHOOL  
16 STUDENTS TO ENROLL IN ACCREDITED PARAMEDIC TRAINING PROGRAMS  
17 THROUGH DUAL-CREDIT OR DUAL-ENROLLMENT; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH  
18 STUDENT CANNOT TAKE THE CERTIFICATION EXAM UNTIL HE OR SHE ATTAINS  
19 18 YEARS OF AGE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

21 **SECTION 1.** This act shall be known and cited as the  
22 "Paramedics Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Grant Program  
23 Act."

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



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

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

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

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

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

36           (a) To provide funding to the Office of Workforce  
37 Development to establish a grant program for the purposes outlined  
38 herein.

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

42           (c) To provide funding for grants to reimburse the cost  
43 of a qualified applicant's fee for the successful completion of  
44 the National Registry Paramedic cognitive and psychomotor  
45 examinations.

46           (d) To gauge the effectiveness of this program by  
47 gathering data related to the participation and employment  
48 outcomes in order to replicate successful efforts in future  
49 workforce development programs.



50           **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established the Paramedics  
51 Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Grant Program ("the  
52 program"). The grant program shall be used by the Office of  
53 Workforce Development, with the Mississippi Department of  
54 Employment Security acting as the fiscal agent, for the purpose of  
55 providing funding for grants to cover the full cost of tuition,  
56 fees, books and any required uniforms for qualified applicants to  
57 attend an accredited paramedic program and to reimburse the cost  
58 of a qualified applicant's fee for the successful completion of  
59 the National Registry Paramedic cognitive and psychomotor  
60 examinations. The grant program shall be funded from monies  
61 appropriated by the Legislature for that purpose.

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

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

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

70                   (b) Have the necessary requisites for an accredited  
71 paramedic program;

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



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

76 (4) The Office of Workforce Development may use a maximum of  
77 five percent (5%) of funds appropriated for the program for the  
78 administration of the program.

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

82 (a) The recipient of a grant shall commit to serving as  
83 a paramedic for three (3) continuous years in the State of  
84 Mississippi;

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

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



97 (d) Repayment of the principal with interest shall be  
98 due and payable in full immediately on the occurrence of either of  
99 the following events:

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

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

106 **SECTION 5.** (1) The Office of Workforce Development shall  
107 submit an annual report on the grant program to the Governor, the  
108 Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
109 the Chair of the House Workforce Development Committee and the  
110 Chair of the Senate Economic and Workforce Development Committee.  
111 The report shall contain a detailed explanation of how the funds  
112 appropriated for the program were awarded and how many paramedics  
113 have participated in the grant program and their employment  
114 outcomes.

115 (2) The Office of Workforce Development is authorized to  
116 enter into a memorandum of agreement with any public or nonpublic  
117 school which provides secondary education to students enrolled  
118 therein, for the purpose of allowing students who are at least  
119 seventeen (17) years of age to be eligible for enrollment in any  
120 accredited paramedic training program without any cost to the  
121 students, through dual-credit or dual-enrollment class offerings



122 through an accredited entity authorized by the office to provide  
123 such trainings for purposes of the program. However, such  
124 students shall not be eligible to take any examination for  
125 certification as a paramedic until the time that he or she attains  
126 the age of eighteen (18), at which time he or she would be allowed  
127 to take the certification examination to become a certified  
128 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

129       **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
130 and after July 1, 2023, and shall stand repealed on June 30, 2023.

