

By: Senator(s) Parks

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2373

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE HOSPITAL NURSES RETENTION LOAN REPAYMENT
 2 PROGRAM FOR NEW NURSING GRADUATES TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE
 3 MISSISSIPPI POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD; TO
 4 PROVIDE FOR THE ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; TO SET A MAXIMUM AMOUNT
 5 OF LOAN REPAYMENT; TO ESTABLISH THE PROCEDURES FOR THE LOAN
 6 PROCESS; TO REQUIRE THE MISSISSIPPI POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
 7 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD TO PROMULGATE REGULATIONS NECESSARY FOR
 8 THE PROPER ADMINISTRATION OF THE ACT, INCLUDING SETTING A FISCAL
 9 YEAR POLICY FOR THE PROGRAM AND APPLICATION DATES AND DEADLINES;
 10 TO ESTABLISH A SPECIAL FUND IN THE STATE TREASURY TO BE DESIGNATED
 11 THE HOSPITAL NURSES LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM FUND; TO REPEAL
 12 SECTIONS 37-106-59 AND 37-106-60, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH
 13 ESTABLISHES A FORGIVABLE LOAN PROGRAM FOR BACCALAUREATE AND
 14 GRADUATE STUDIES IN NURSING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

16 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the "Hospital Nurses
 17 Retention Loan Repayment Program" for new nursing graduates to be
 18 administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
 19 Assistance Board.

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

22 (a) Legal residency in the State of Mississippi;

23 (b) Gained employment within the last year for the
 24 first time as a full-time licensed practical nurse or licensed



25 registered nurse at a general acute care hospital in the State of
26 Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State Department
27 of Health;

28 (c) A current relevant Mississippi professional
29 license; and

30 (d) Outstanding qualifying educational loans, received
31 at any point during the recipients postsecondary education career,
32 which may include the principal, interest and related expenses
33 such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of
34 government and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for
35 educational expense.

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

41 (4) Recipients in the program shall be selected on a
42 first-come, first-served basis from all eligible applicants. The
43 Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board
44 shall renew eligible applicants approved in prior years only if
45 the renewal applicant continues to meet the standards set forth in
46 this act, and the renewal applicant has not received full funding
47 provided by this subsection (4).

48 (5) Awards for recipients who are employed at a licensed
49 general acute care hospital in the state may be a maximum of Six



50 Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00) for each year of employment up to
51 three (3) years.

52 (6) A recipient shall not be penalized for ending employment
53 at a licensed general acute care hospital in the State of
54 Mississippi if the recipient begins working for another licensed
55 general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi during the
56 year on which the award is based.

57 (7) Awards shall be granted on a year-to-year basis, and
58 recipients have no obligation to seek a subsequent award.

59 (8) Awards shall be paid annually, after the expiration of
60 the year of employment for which the award was granted, to the
61 recipient's lender or loan service provider, to be applied to the
62 outstanding balance. Monies paid by the recipient or on the
63 recipient's behalf toward qualifying educational loans before
64 payment of the award shall not be eligible for reimbursement
65 through the program.

66 (9) During the employment year for which the award is
67 granted, a recipient shall at all times keep the State Financial
68 Aid Board informed of any changes to the recipient's current,
69 correct and complete employment information and status.

70 (10) Recipients who fail to maintain a relevant Mississippi
71 professional license or fail to fulfill the year of employment on
72 which the award was based forfeit any right to the award.

73 (11) The Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
74 Assistance Board, in collaboration with the State Board of Nursing



75 and any other applicable state agency as determined by the
76 Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board,
77 shall attempt to track award recipients under this program through
78 their third employment year, unless the recipient leaves
79 employment at a licensed general acute care hospital in the state
80 at an earlier date. Data collected shall include each recipients'
81 place of employment and any other pertinent information necessary
82 to determine the efficacy of the program in retaining nurses in
83 licensed general acute care hospitals in the State of Mississippi.

84 (12) The Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
85 Assistance Board shall promulgate regulations necessary for the
86 proper administration of this section, including setting a fiscal
87 year policy for the program and application dates and deadlines.

88 (13) There is established in the State Treasury a special
89 fund to be designated the "Hospital Nurses Retention Loan
90 Repayment Program Fund," into which shall be deposited those funds
91 appropriated by the Legislature, and any other funds that may be
92 made available, for the purpose of implementing the loan repayment
93 program established herein. Money in the fund at the end of the
94 fiscal year shall not lapse into the General Fund, and interest
95 earned on any amounts deposited into the fund shall be credited to
96 the special fund.

97 (14) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2027.

98 **SECTION 2.** Sections 37-106-59 and 37-106-60, Mississippi
99 Code of 1972, which establishes a forgivable loan program for



100 baccalaureate and graduate studies in nursing, is repealed from
101 and after July 1, 2023.

102 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
103 and after its passage.

