

By: Senator(s) Blount, Jackson

To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2585

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-36, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
 2 TO REVISE THE AWARD CRITERIA OF THE WILLIAM F. WINTER AND JACK
 3 REED, SR., TEACHER LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE
 4 STATE FINANCIAL AID BOARD SHALL DEVELOP RULES FOR ENSURING THAT
 5 EXPENSES OF THE PROGRAM IN A FISCAL YEAR DO NOT EXCEED FUNDING FOR
 6 THE PROGRAM IN THAT FISCAL YEAR; TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE
 7 FINANCIAL AID BOARD MAY LIMIT THE ACCEPTANCE OF APPLICATIONS AND
 8 MAY LIMIT THE NUMBER OF AWARDS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-36, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
 11 amended as follows:

12 37-106-36. (1) There is established the "William F. Winter
 13 and Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan Repayment Program."

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

16 (a) Graduated from a baccalaureate degree-granting
 17 institution of higher learning which is regionally accredited by
 18 the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) or a
 19 comparable accreditation body;

20 (b) Signed a contract as a full-time * * * teacher in a
 21 public school district in Mississippi;



22 (c) Obtained a standard five-year license or a
23 nontraditional five-year alternate route license. Persons with
24 provisional emergency licenses shall not be eligible applicants;
25 and

26 (d) Outstanding qualifying undergraduate or graduate
27 educational loans, which may include the principal, interest and
28 related expenses such as the required interest premium on the
29 unpaid balances of government and commercial loans obtained by the
30 recipient for undergraduate educational expense.

31 (3) Persons who have received funds from other forgivable
32 loan programs established for teachers under Mississippi law, or
33 who are presently in default or delinquent on any federal, state,
34 local or commercial qualifying educational loan, shall not be
35 eligible for this program.

36 (4) Provided that initial recipients remain eligible under
37 the provisions of subsection (2) of this section, they may retain
38 eligibility for two (2) additional awards, subject to the
39 availability of funds.

40 (5) Initial recipients shall be selected on a first-come,
41 first-served basis of all eligible applicants, * * * subject to
42 the availability of funds. In the second and * * * third years of
43 an applicant's continued eligibility, priority consideration shall
44 first be given to renewal applicants. * * * The State Financial
45 Aid Board shall develop rules for ensuring that expenses of the
46 program in a fiscal year do not exceed funding for the program in



47 that fiscal year. For that purpose, and any other provision of
48 this section to the contrary notwithstanding, the State Financial
49 Aid Board may limit the acceptance of applications and may limit
50 the number of awards.

51 (* * * 6) Among * * * teacher recipients, priority
52 consideration shall be given to persons who are teaching in a
53 public school district designated as a geographical critical
54 teacher shortage area by the State Board of Education.

55 (* * * 7) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract
56 to teach in a public school district that is not designated as a
57 geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

58 (a) One Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$1,500.00) for
59 the * * * initial award;

60 (b) Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for
61 the second * * * award; and

62 (c) Three Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$3,500.00) for
63 the third * * * award.

64 (* * * 8) Awards for recipients who have signed a contract
65 to teach in a public school district that is designated as a
66 geographical critical teacher shortage area shall be as follows:

67 (a) Four Thousand Dollars (\$4,000.00) for the * * *
68 initial award;

69 (b) Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for the
70 second * * * award, provided the recipient continues to teach in
71 the same public school district or another public school district



72 designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of
73 Education; and

74 (c) Six Thousand Dollars (\$6,000.00) for the
75 third * * * award, provided the recipient continues to teach in
76 the same public school district or another public school district
77 designated a geographical shortage area by the State Board of
78 Education.

79 (* * * 9) An * * * initial recipient who moves to another
80 public school district shall be eligible to receive an award based
81 on the amount allowed under the program in the new district where
82 the teacher is employed.

83 (* * * 10) Awards shall be granted on a year-to-year basis,
84 and recipients shall have no obligation to seek a future award.

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

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



96 (* * *13) Recipients who fail to maintain a standard or
97 nontraditional license or fail to fulfill the one-year teaching
98 contract on which the award was based shall forfeit any right to
99 the award.

100 (* * *14) The State Financial Aid Board, in collaboration
101 with the State Board of Education, shall track recipients of an
102 award under this program through * * * the fourth year after
103 receiving their initial award, unless the recipient shall leave
104 teaching in a public school district at an earlier date. Data
105 collected shall include recipients' undergraduate or graduate
106 institution, school district, subject area/grade level in teaching
107 and any other pertinent information necessary to determine the
108 efficacy of the program in retaining teachers * * *.

109 (* * *15) The State Financial Aid Board shall promulgate
110 regulations necessary for the proper administration of this
111 section, including rules for ensuring that expenses of the program
112 in a fiscal year do not exceed funding for the program in that
113 fiscal year.

114 (* * *16) There is established in the State Treasury a
115 special fund to be designated the "William F. Winter and Jack
116 Reed, Sr., Loan Repayment Program Fund," into which shall be
117 deposited those funds appropriated by the Legislature, and any
118 other funds that may be made available, for the purpose of
119 implementing the loan repayment program established herein. Money
120 in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the



121 General Fund, and interest earned on any amounts deposited into
122 the fund shall be credited to the special fund

123 * * *

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

