

By: Senator(s) DeLano

To: Universities and  
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2718

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A PAID INTERNSHIP PROGRAM UNDER THE  
2 MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES TO TRAIN  
3 AND RETAIN COLLEGE GRADUATES WITH A TECHNICAL OR ENGINEERING  
4 DEGREE; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

6 **SECTION 1.** (1) Within the limits of the funds available to  
7 the Mississippi Department of Information Technology Services  
8 (MDITS) for such purpose, the executive director may grant a paid  
9 internship to undergraduate-level students classified as juniors  
10 or seniors and pursuing coursework toward a technical or  
11 engineering Bachelor's degree or to graduate-level students  
12 pursuing coursework toward a technical or engineering Master's  
13 degree. Qualified applicants shall receive funds which may be  
14 used to pay for tuition, books and other education-related  
15 expenses and fees. It is the intent of the Legislature that the  
16 paid internship program shall be used as an incentive for students  
17 pursuing a technical degree to develop job-related skills and to  
18 encourage technical careers at MDITS.



19           (2) In order to be eligible for the program, an applicant  
20 must:

21           (a) Attend a university, college or technical school  
22 approved and designated by MDITS;

23           (b) Work a total of three hundred thirty six (336)  
24 hours each summer at MDITS in Jackson, Mississippi;

25           (c) Agree to work with MDITS upon graduation for a  
26 period of time equivalent to the period of time for which the  
27 applicant receives compensation, calculated to the nearest whole  
28 month, but in no event less than two (2) years; and

29           (d) Satisfy the following conditions:

30           (i) Undergraduate stipulations: Applicants must  
31 have successfully completed a minimum of fifty-eight (58) semester  
32 hours toward a technical or engineering bachelor's degree from a  
33 Mississippi institution of higher learning and earned a minimum  
34 cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale, which  
35 GPA the applicant shall maintain if accepted into the program; or

36           (ii) Graduate stipulations: Applicants must have  
37 met the regular admission standards of and have been accepted into  
38 a technical or engineering master's program at a Mississippi  
39 institution of higher learning. Accepted applicants shall  
40 maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in all  
41 coursework counted toward the technical or engineering master's  
42 degree.



43           (3)   (a)   Before being placed into the program, each  
44 applicant shall enter into a contract with MDITS, which shall be  
45 deemed a contract with the State of Mississippi, agreeing to the  
46 terms and conditions upon which the internship shall be granted to  
47 them. The contract shall include such terms and provisions  
48 necessary to carry out the full purpose and intent of this  
49 section. The form of such contract shall be prepared and approved  
50 by the Attorney General of this state and shall be signed by the  
51 executive director and the participant.

52           (b)   Upon entry into the program, participants will  
53 become employees of MDITS during their time in the program and  
54 shall be eligible for benefits such as medical insurance paid by  
55 the agency for the participant; however, in accordance with  
56 Section 25-11-105, those participants shall not become members of  
57 the Public Employees Retirement System while participating in the  
58 program. Participants shall not accrue personal or major medical  
59 leave while they are in the program.

60           (c)   MDITS shall have the authority to cancel any  
61 contract made between the agency and any program participant upon  
62 such cause being deemed sufficient by the executive director.

63           (d)   MDITS shall have full and complete authority and  
64 power to sue in its own name any participant for any damages due  
65 to the state on any such uncompleted contract, which suit shall be  
66 filed and handled by the Attorney General. MDITS may contract  
67 with a collections agency or banking institution, subject to



68 approval by the Attorney General, for collection of any damages  
69 due to the state from any participant. The State of Mississippi,  
70 MDITS and its employees are immune from any suit brought in law or  
71 equity for actions taken by the collection agency or banking  
72 institution incidental to or arising from their performance under  
73 the contract. MDITS, the collection agency and banking  
74 institution may negotiate for the payment of a sum that is less  
75 than full payment in order to satisfy any damages the participant  
76 owes the state, subject to approval by the executive directors.

77 (4) (a) Any participant who fails to complete  
78 undergraduate-or-graduate-level coursework toward a technical or  
79 engineering degree or withdraws from school at any time before  
80 completing their education shall be liable to repay to MDITS all  
81 monies received during the time the recipient was in the program  
82 at the rate of pay received by the participant while in the  
83 program, including benefits paid by the agency for the participant  
84 and monies received for tuition, books and other education-related  
85 expenses and fees with interest accruing at ten percent (10%) per  
86 annum from the date the participant failed or withdrew from  
87 school. The participant will not be liable for repayment for any  
88 money earned during the required summer hours. Such money shall  
89 be considered earned by the participant at the federal minimum  
90 wage rate.

91 (b) All paid internship compensation received by the  
92 participant while in school shall be considered earned,



93 conditioned upon the fulfillment of the terms and obligations of  
94 the paid internship contract and this section. However, no  
95 recipient of the paid internship shall accrue personal or major  
96 medical leave while the recipient is pursuing junior or senior  
97 undergraduate-level coursework toward a technical or engineering  
98 Bachelor's degree or graduate-level coursework toward a technical  
99 or engineering Master's degree. The participant shall not be  
100 liable for liquidated damages.

101 (c) If the recipient does not work at MDITS for the  
102 period required under subsection (2)(c) of this section, the  
103 recipient shall be liable for repayment on demand of the remaining  
104 portion of the compensation that the recipient was paid while in  
105 the program which has not been unconditionally earned, with  
106 interest accruing at ten percent (10%) per annum from the  
107 recipient's date of graduation or the date that the recipient last  
108 worked at ITS, whichever is the later date. In addition, there  
109 shall be included in any contract for paid student internship a  
110 provision for liquidated damages equal to Five Thousand Dollars  
111 (\$5,000.00), which may be reduced on a pro rata basis for each  
112 year served under such contract.

113 **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this act shall be codified in Title  
114 25, Chapter 53, Mississippi Code of 1972.

115 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
116 and after July 1, 2023.

