

By: Representatives Carpenter, Summers,
Anthony

To: Workforce Development

HOUSE BILL NO. 1013

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE PARAMEDICS RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION
2 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE USED BY
3 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 Program Act."

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

49 **SECTION 3.** (1) There is established the Paramedics
50 Recruitment and Retention Scholarship Program ("the program").
51 The scholarship program shall be used by the Office of Workforce



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

114 (2) The Office of Workforce Development is authorized to
115 enter into a memorandum of agreement with any public or nonpublic
116 school which provides secondary education to students enrolled
117 therein, for the purpose of allowing students who are at least
118 seventeen (17) years of age to be eligible for enrollment in any
119 accredited paramedic training program without any cost to the
120 students, through dual-credit or dual-enrollment class offerings
121 through an accredited entity authorized by the office to provide
122 such trainings for purposes of the program. However, such
123 students shall not be eligible to take any examination for



124 certification as a paramedic until the time that he or she attains
125 the age of eighteen (18), at which time he or she would be allowed
126 to take the certification examination to become a certified
127 Emergency Medical Technician (EMT).

128 **SECTION 6.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
129 and after July 1, 2024.

