

By: The Entire Membership

To: Appropriations A

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
HOUSE BILL NO. 1210

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE "DR. ELTON MAC HUDDLESTON RURAL
2 VETERINARIANS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY"
3 FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING SCHOLARSHIPS TO QUALIFYING STUDENTS
4 PURSUING A DEGREE IN VETERINARY MEDICINE, WHO WILL THEN COMMIT TO
5 THE PRACTICE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE IN RURAL AREAS OF THE STATE;
6 TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEAN OF THE MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY
7 COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE SHALL ADMINISTER THE SCHOLARSHIP
8 PROGRAM; TO CAP THE NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED ANNUALLY; TO
9 LIMIT TO FOUR YEARS DURATION FOR WHICH A STUDENT MAY RECEIVE
10 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS; TO DEFINE TERMINOLOGY USED IN THE ACT; TO
11 AUTHORIZE THE DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE TO
12 PROMULGATE RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE
13 PROGRAM WITH THE ADVICE AND CONSENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF
14 MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE
15 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING; TO PRESCRIBE THE MINIMUM CRITERIA
16 FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR RECEIPT OF SCHOLARSHIP, CONTINUED MAINTENANCE
17 OF THE SCHOLARSHIP AND POST PROGRAM COMPLETION OBLIGATIONS AND
18 PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO PERFORM THE CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION OF THE
19 SCHOLARSHIP AGREEMENT; TO AUTHORIZE THE MISSISSIPPI STATE
20 UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE IS AUTHORIZED TO ACCEPT
21 GIFTS, DONATIONS, BEQUESTS, GRANTS AND ANY OTHER MONIES FROM ANY
22 SOURCE WHATSOEVER TO BE USED FOR THE PURPOSES OF ADMINISTERING THE
23 PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE THE DEAN TO SUBMIT AN ANNUAL REPORT TO THE
24 LEGISLATURE WITH INFORMATION ABOUT WHO RECEIVED SCHOLARSHIPS UNDER
25 THE PROGRAM AND HOW MUCH EACH PERSON RECEIVED, AND THE AMOUNT OF
26 ANY GIFTS, DONATIONS AND OTHER FUNDS RECEIVED AND HOW THOSE FUNDS
27 WERE USED FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED
28 PURPOSES.

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

30 **SECTION 1.** There is established, at Mississippi State
31 University, the "Dr. Elton Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinarians



32 Scholarship Program" for the purpose of identifying and providing
33 qualified students with scholarships to assist such students in
34 pursuing degrees through matriculation in veterinary medicine.

35 The scholarship program shall:

36 (a) Be developed and implemented in order to provide
37 encouragement, opportunities and incentives for persons pursuing a
38 veterinary medicine degree at Mississippi State University to:

39 (i) Provide veterinary services in rural
40 Mississippi communities; and

41 (ii) Receive specialized training to meet the
42 needs of rural Mississippians and livestock producers in rural
43 Mississippi communities;

44 (b) Be administered by the Dean of the Mississippi
45 State University College of Veterinary Medicine; and

46 (c) Annually award scholarships to an average of two
47 (2) scholars, whose scholarship assistance may be funded annually
48 for a period not to exceed four (4) years.

49 **SECTION 2.** As used in this act, the following terms shall
50 have the meanings ascribed in this section unless context of use
51 clearly requires otherwise:

52 (a) "Veterinary student" means a student enrolled in
53 the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

54 (b) "Dean" means the Dean of the Mississippi State
55 University College of Veterinary Medicine.



56 (c) "Food supply animal" includes cattle, hogs, sheep,
57 goats and poultry.

58 (d) "Food supply animal veterinarian" means a
59 veterinarian who is engaged in general or food supply animal
60 practice as his or her primary focus of practice and who has
61 thirty percent (30%) of his or her practice devoted to food supply
62 animal veterinary medicine.

63 (e) "Large animal veterinarian" means a veterinarian
64 whose practice is focused primarily on the health and safety of
65 farm animals such as cattle, sheep, goats, pigs and horses, who
66 must spend sixty percent (60%) of their time providing care for
67 large animals.

68 (f) "Program" means the Dr. Elton Mac Huddleston Rural
69 Veterinarian Scholarship Program administered by the Mississippi
70 State University College of Veterinary Medicine.

71 (g) "Rural community" means an area of the state with a
72 population density less than five hundred (500) people per square
73 mile as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture.

74 (h) "Rural mixed animal veterinarian" means a
75 veterinarian who practices in a rural community with provision of
76 care to both small animals, i.e., dogs or cats, and large animals,
77 i.e., cattle, sheep, goats, pigs or horses, within which the
78 veterinarian must spend a minimum of thirty percent (30%) of his
79 or her time providing care to large animals.



80 **SECTION 3.** The Dean of the Mississippi State University
81 College of Veterinary Medicine shall have the following powers and
82 duties:

83 (a) Develop the administrative policy for the Dr. Elton
84 Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinarians Scholarship Program;

85 (b) Promulgating rules and regulations, with the advice
86 and consent of the President of Mississippi State University of
87 the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning,
88 pertaining to the implementation and operation of the Dr. Elton
89 Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinarians Scholarship Program;

90 (c) Annually establish a selection committee, composed
91 of faculty of the Mississippi State University College of
92 Veterinary Medicine, rural mixed animal veterinarians and large
93 animal veterinarians, which shall conduct a process, independent
94 from the university's Admissions Committee, to review
95 applications, conduct virtual or in-person interviews and select
96 recipients;

97 (d) Establish a budget, with the advice and consent of
98 the President of Mississippi State University of the Board of
99 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, to support the
100 activities of the program and periodically review, and if
101 appropriate, revise the scholarship and other stipends offered
102 through the program;



103 (e) Review scholarship recipients' progress in the
104 program and mentor students and veterinarians participating in the
105 program; and

106 (f) Develop and participate in programs that provide
107 initial practice support in collaboration with other interested
108 professional organizations;

109 (h) Give preference for approving communities for
110 purposes of Section 4(2)(d) to communities located in areas
111 designated by the American Veterinary Medical Association or the
112 United States Department of Agriculture as veterinary shortage
113 areas.

114 **SECTION 4.** (1) (a) Subject to the availability of funds,
115 the program may annually enter into agreements with up to an
116 average of two (2) veterinary students as determined by the
117 criteria established for the administration of the Dr. Elton Mac
118 Huddleston Rural Veterinarians Scholarship Program.

119 (b) Each student entering into a program agreement
120 under this section shall receive annual assistance in an amount
121 not to exceed the in-state tuition rate assessed for attending the
122 Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine for a
123 period not to exceed four (4) years for tuition and fees incurred
124 by the student in pursuit of his or her veterinary medicine
125 degree. Upon completion of all commitments under the provisions
126 of the agreement and the provisions of this section, the financial



127 obligations pursuant to this section shall be deemed satisfied and
128 forgiven.

129 (2) To be eligible for program scholarship funds, recipients
130 shall:

131 (a) Be a student of the Mississippi State University
132 College of Veterinary Medicine;

133 (b) Agree to become licensed in the practice of
134 veterinary medicine in the State of Mississippi upon graduation;

135 (c) Complete all requirements in public health,
136 livestock biosecurity, foreign animal disease diagnosis,
137 regulatory veterinary medicine and zoonotic disease, and an
138 externship and mentoring requirement with a licensed, accredited
139 veterinarian in a rural area, as required by the veterinary
140 medical school;

141 (d) Enter into a contract with the program to provide
142 full-time veterinary medicine services as a food supply animal
143 veterinarian or as a rural mixed animal veterinarian for a minimum
144 of four (4) years in one or more communities approved by the
145 program; and

146 (e) Commence the full-time practice of veterinary
147 medicine in a rural community within ninety (90) days after
148 completion of the degree program or, if the scholarship recipient
149 enters a post-degree training program, such as graduate school,
150 internship or residency program, within ninety (90) days after
151 completion of the post-degree training program; and



152 (f) Be accredited by the United States Department of
153 Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service,
154 Veterinary Services to provide services relating to food supply
155 animals within six (6) months of graduation or passage of
156 veterinary licensure examination.

157 (3) Priority shall be given to Mississippi residents. If
158 the number of Mississippi residents applying for scholarship funds
159 is less than the number of slots available, nonresident students
160 may be considered. Nonresident students shall only receive
161 scholarship funds sufficient to pay for in-state tuition rates,
162 and they must meet the same obligations as specified in subsection
163 (2) of this section for students who are residents of the State of
164 Mississippi.

165 (4) Recipients of the scholarship must remain in good
166 academic standing while in receipt of this scholarship, as
167 specified in the rules and regulations promulgated by the Dean of
168 the Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine
169 with the advice and consent of the President of Mississippi State
170 University of the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of
171 Higher Learning. If a student is dismissed or withdraws from the
172 Mississippi State University College of Veterinary Medicine, the
173 dean shall assess the circumstances of the student's dismissal or
174 withdrawal and make a formal recommendation regarding whether the
175 student shall be liable for the repayment of all or a portion of
176 the financial assistance provided to the student through the



177 program, along with other penalties that may be prescribed in
178 accordance with the policies adopted by the dean as prescribed in
179 Section 6 of this act.

180 (5) The dean may adopt additional provisions, requirements
181 or conditions for participating in the program as are practicable
182 and appropriate to accomplish the provisions of the program or
183 which may be required for the implementation or administration of
184 the program, and which are not inconsistent with the provisions of
185 this section.

186 **SECTION 5.** (1) The Mississippi State University College of
187 Veterinary Medicine is authorized to accept gifts, donations,
188 bequests, trusts, grants, endowments, transfers of money or
189 securities, repayments and any other monies from any source
190 whatsoever to be used for the purposes of administering the Dr.
191 Elton Mac Huddleston Rural Veterinarians Scholarship Program.

192 (2) The dean shall prepare and submit an annual report to
193 the Legislature not later than December 1 of each year, which
194 shall include, but not be limited to, information about who
195 received scholarships under the program and how much each person
196 received, and the amount of any funds received under subsection
197 (1) of this section and how those funds were used for the purpose
198 of the program.

199 (3) The appropriation request of the Mississippi State
200 University College of Veterinary Medicine and the program shall be



201 reduced if a saturation point is achieved and the shortage of
202 veterinary services in rural Mississippi is adequately addressed.

203 **SECTION 6.** (1) A veterinarian shall be released from the
204 program contract without penalty if:

205 (a) The veterinarian has completed the service
206 requirements of the contract;

207 (b) The veterinarian is unable to complete the service
208 requirements of the contract because of a permanent physical
209 disability;

210 (c) The veterinarian demonstrates extreme hardship or
211 shows other good cause justifying the release; or

212 (d) The veterinarian dies.

213 (2) An obligation to engage in the practice of veterinary
214 medicine in accordance with the provisions of Section 4 shall be
215 postponed during:

216 (a) Any period of temporary medical disability during
217 which the person obligated is unable to practice veterinary
218 medicine due to the disability; and

219 (b) Any other period of postponement agreed to or
220 determined in accordance with criteria agreed to in the practice
221 agreement.

222 (3) A veterinarian shall be released from further
223 performance of veterinary services under the program contract if
224 he or she is unable to perform his or her contractual obligations
225 to provide veterinary services due to the suspension or revocation



226 of his or her federal accreditation or denial, refusal of renewal,
227 limitation, suspension, revocation, or other disciplinary measure
228 taken against his or her license to practice in the State of
229 Mississippi pursuant to the Mississippi Veterinary Practice Act,
230 Chapter 39, Title 73, Mississippi Code of 1972, particularly,
231 Sections 73-39-75 and 73-39-77. If a veterinarian is released
232 from his or her contract pursuant to this subsection, the program
233 may recover a portion of or all of the payments made to such
234 veterinarian under Section 4 of this act. The dean may use
235 appropriate remedies available to enforce this subsection.

236 (4) Upon the failure of a person to satisfy the obligation
237 to engage in the full-time practice of veterinary medicine in a
238 rural community in accordance with the provisions of this section
239 with no just cause as outlined in subsection (1), that person
240 shall, within ninety (90) days of the failure, be liable for the
241 repayment of all financial assistance provided to such person
242 through the program prescribed in accordance with the policies
243 adopted by the dean, less a prorated amount based on any periods
244 of veterinary medicine practice meeting the requirements of this
245 section, plus interest at the prime rate of two percent (2%) from
246 the date the assistance accrued. The interest on any unpaid
247 obligation for violations specified in this subsection shall be
248 compounded annually.

249 **SECTION 7.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
250 and after July 1, 2024.

