

By: Senator(s) DeLano

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2411

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 Bachelor's degree in a
11 technical or engineering field or to graduate-level students
12 pursuing coursework toward a Master's degree in a technical or
13 engineering field. Qualified applicants shall receive funds which
14 may be 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 Bachelor's degree in a technical or engineering
33 field from a Mississippi institution of higher learning and earned
34 a minimum cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0
35 scale, which GPA the applicant shall maintain if accepted into the
36 program; or

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

116 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
117 and after July 1, 2024.

