

By: Representative Scoggins

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations A

HOUSE BILL NO. 628

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-29, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO REVISE AND RENAME THE MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE
3 GRANT AS THE MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE AND WORKFORCE
4 ACCELERATION GRANT (MTAWAG); TO PRESCRIBE THE CRITERIA FOR
5 ELIGIBILITY; TO REMOVE THE EXCLUSION WHICH PROHIBITS RECIPIENTS OF
6 PELL GRANT FUNDS FROM RECEIVING FUNDS UNDER THE MTAWAG; TO MAKE
7 MTAWAG FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FULL- AND PART-TIME STUDENTS TO INCLUDE
8 WORKING ADULT LEARNERS AS ELIGIBLE FOR RECEIPT OF FUNDS TO THE
9 ACQUISITION OF A BACCALAUREATE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE OR CERTIFIED
10 CREDENTIAL; TO ELIMINATE THE INITIAL ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR
11 THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL FOR EXTENDED
12 PERIODS AND DESIRE TO RETURN TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL LEARNING
13 TO EARN A DEGREE OR CREDENTIAL; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

15 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-29, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
16 amended as follows:

17 37-106-29. (1) There is established the Mississippi
18 Resident Tuition Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant
19 Program for college or university freshmen, sophomores, juniors
20 and seniors to be administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary
21 Education Financial Assistance Board established under Section
22 37-106-9, Mississippi Code of 1972, which shall set the dates and
23 deadlines for applying for an award under this section. The board

24 shall establish such rules and regulations as it deems necessary
25 and proper to carry out the purposes and intent of this section.

26 (2) To be eligible to receive Mississippi Resident Tuition
27 Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant (MTAWAG) award, a
28 student must meet the following qualifications:

29 (a) Be a resident of the State of Mississippi, which
30 such residency status, for the purpose of receiving grant funds
31 under the MTAWAG Program, shall be determined in the same manner
32 as resident status for tuition purposes is prescribed in Sections
33 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, with exception being given to Section
34 37-103-17;

35 (b) Complete the Free Application for Federal Student
36 Aid (FAFSA) every year for which the student wishes to be
37 considered for aid by the deadline established by the board;

38 (c) Complete the Mississippi Aid Application (MAAPP)
39 every year for which the student wishes to be considered for aid
40 by the deadline established by the board; and

41 (d) Have received acceptance for enrollment at any
42 state institution of higher learning, public community or junior
43 college located in this, or any regionally accredited,
44 state-approved, nonprofit two-year or four-year college or
45 university located in this state and approved by the board.

46 (* * *3) The board shall approve Mississippi Resident
47 Tuition Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grants to * * *
48 freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior Mississippi residents



49 who * * * enroll, on at least a half-time basis, at any state
50 institution of higher learning, public community or junior
51 college, or any four-year regionally accredited, state-approved,
52 nonprofit college or university located in this state.

53 (* * *4) Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and
54 Workforce Acceleration Grants shall be * * * applied to tuition,
55 rooms and meals, books, materials and fees not to exceed One
56 Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) for junior and senior students
57 attending state institutions of higher learning in Mississippi or
58 four-year regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit
59 colleges and universities in Mississippi, and Five Hundred Dollars
60 (\$500.00) for freshmen and sophomores attending state institutions
61 of higher learning or public community or junior colleges in
62 Mississippi, or regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit
63 two-year or four-year colleges in Mississippi, which will be
64 prorated per term, semester or quarter of the academic year * * *.

65 * * *

66 (5) By accepting a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance
67 and Workforce Acceleration Grant, the student is attesting to the
68 accuracy, completeness and correctness of information provided to
69 demonstrate the student's eligibility. Falsification of such
70 information shall result in the denial of any pending grant and
71 revocation of any award currently held to the extent that no
72 further payments shall be made. Any student knowingly making
73 false statements in order to receive a grant shall be guilty of a



74 misdemeanor punishable, upon conviction thereof, by a fine of up
75 to Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), a prison sentence of up to
76 one (1) year in the county jail, or both, and shall be required to
77 return all Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and Workforce
78 Acceleration Grants wrongfully obtained.

79 (6) Eligibility for renewal of Mississippi Resident Tuition
80 Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grants shall be evaluated at
81 the end of each semester, or term, of each academic year. As a
82 condition for renewal, a student shall:

83 (a) Make steady academic progress toward a certificate
84 or degree, as outlined in the school Satisfactory Academic
85 Progress Standards and certified by the institution's
86 registrar * * *; and

87 * * *

88 (* * *b) Have a cumulative grade point average of at
89 least 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester
90 or trimester or term of enrollment.

91 (7) * * * Payment of the Mississippi Resident Tuition
92 Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant shall be made payable
93 to the recipient and the educational institution and * * * sent
94 directly to the institution * * *.

95 (* * *8) In order for an institution to remain eligible for
96 its students to participate in the Mississippi Resident Tuition
97 Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant Program, the
98 institution shall comply with the following requirements:



104 (b) The institution is required to make refunds to the
105 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and Workforce Acceleration
106 Grant Fund for any funds which have not been disbursed to the
107 recipient, in the case of students who have received a grant but
108 who terminate enrollment during the academic term, semester or
109 quarter of the academic year if an institution's refund policies
110 permit a student to receive a refund in such instance. The
111 recipient shall be responsible for the refund of any funds which
112 have been disbursed by the institution in such instance.

113 * * *

122 (* * *9) No student may receive a Mississippi Resident
123 Tuition Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant for more than



124 the equivalent semesters or quarters required to complete one (1)
125 baccalaureate degree or one (1) certificate or associate degree
126 program per institution.

127 (* * *10) No student receiving a Mississippi Eminent
128 Scholars Grant as provided in Section 37-106-31 shall be eligible
129 to receive the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and
130 Workforce Acceleration Grant pursuant to this section * * * during
131 the same term. In no case shall any student receive any
132 combination of student financial aid that would exceed the cost of
133 attendance * * *.

134 (11) For purposes of this section, certificated shall mean,
135 but not be limited to, all postsecondary vocational programs in
136 eligible institutions approved by the board.

137 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
138 and after July 1, 2025.

