

By: Representative Scoggin

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 LEARNINGS 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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

* * *

(5) By accepting a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and Workforce Acceleration Grant, the student is attesting to the accuracy, completeness and correctness of information provided to demonstrate the student's eligibility. Falsification of such information shall result in the denial of any pending grant and revocation of any award currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be made. Any student knowingly making 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:



99 (a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility
100 status of each awarded student shall be made to the board for each
101 term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student
102 receives a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance and Workforce
103 Acceleration Grant.

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 * * *

114 (* * *c) The board may conduct its own annual audits
115 of any institution participating in the Mississippi Resident
116 Tuition Assistance Grant Program. The board may suspend or revoke
117 an institution's eligibility to receive future monies under the
118 program if it finds that the institution has not complied with the
119 provisions of this section. In determining a student's initial
120 eligibility, the number of prior semesters enrolled will not be
121 counted against the student.

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



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

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

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

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

