

By: Senator(s) Tate, Barrett, Seymour,
England, Sparks, Boyd, McCaughn, McLendon,
Hickman, Jackson

To: Veterans and Military
Affairs; Universities and
Colleges

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2444

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-41, TO AUTHORIZE THE BOARD OF
2 TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO ESTABLISH A
3 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FUNDED BY LEGISLATIVE APPROPRIATION UNDER
4 WHICH CERTAIN VETERANS SHALL RECEIVE FREE TUITION AT
5 STATE-SUPPORTED UNIVERSITIES AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES BASED ON ONE
6 MONTH FREE TUITION FOR EACH MONTH SERVED DURING A QUALIFYING
7 PERIOD; TO ESTABLISH THE COMBAT VETERAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND IN THE
8 STATE TREASURY; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

10 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-41, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
11 amended as follows:

12 37-106-41. (1) If any member of the armed services, whose
13 official house of record and residence is within the State of
14 Mississippi, is officially reported as being either a prisoner of
15 war or missing in action in Southeast Asia or has been a prisoner
16 of a foreign government as the result of a military action against
17 the United States naval vessel, Pueblo, his child or children
18 shall be entitled to an eight-semester scholarship without cost,
19 exclusive of books, food, school supplies, materials and dues or
20 fees for extracurricular activities at any state-supported college
21 or university of his choice within this state. However, no child



will be entitled to receive benefits during any semester or quarter when said child has reached the age of twenty-three (23) years on the first day of the semester or quarter.

(2) The provisions of this section shall apply to the child or children of any member of the armed services who is officially reported as being either a prisoner of war or missing in action in Southeast Asia whose spouse was a resident of this state for a period of not less than ten (10) years during her minority and is a resident or physically resides within this state and does continually reside within this state at the time of enrollment and during the enrollment, and is a resident or physically resides within this state as of April 9, 1973.

(3) It is further provided that the provisions of this section shall apply to the child or children of any person who was a resident of this state at the time he was inducted into the Armed Forces of the United States of America and who is either a former prisoner of war or officially reported as being a prisoner of war or missing in action in Southeast Asia and who, or his spouse if she was a resident of this state for a period of not less than ten (10) years during her minority, is a resident of this state and at the time of enrollment and during the enrollment of his child or children at any state-supported college or university in this state resided or resides in this state.

(4) Any applicant qualified and desiring a scholarship under this section shall apply in writing to the board. The board shall



make inquiries into each such application and shall make the investigation as it deems proper to establish and validate all claims made under this section before a scholarship is granted.

(5) In addition to the scholarship prescribed in subsections (1) through (4), the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall establish a scholarship program, subject to appropriation by the Legislature, allowing veterans who have served in a combat zone or have a service-connected disability to receive scholarship tuition grants on a month-for-month basis at state-supported universities and community colleges.

(a) To qualify, veterans must:

- (i) Be a Mississippi resident;
- (ii) Have been honorably discharged;
- (iii) Qualify for in-state tuition;
- (iv) Not be eligible for federal educational benefits; and
- (v) Have served on active duty during a wartime period and received a campaign medal for combat operations outside the U.S.; or
- (vi) Have a service-connected disability rating of ten percent (10%) or more.

(b) Eligible veterans may receive a one-month scholarship grant for each month served during a qualifying period. Veterans may receive a minimum of one (1) academic year and a maximum of four (4) academic years of scholarship grants.



72 (c) To apply, veterans may apply to their selected
73 school's financial aid office or the Mississippi Army National
74 Guard Education Service Office.

75 (d) Scholarships to veterans under this subsection (5)
76 shall be subject to specific appropriation therefor by the
77 Legislature. There is hereby created in the State Treasury the
78 Combat Veteran Scholarship Fund to be comprised of funds
79 appropriated by the Legislature or provided from other sources for
80 the purpose of making scholarship grants available to veterans
81 under this subsection (5). The appropriation to the Combat
82 Veteran Scholarship Fund shall not exceed Five Hundred Thousand
83 Dollars (\$500,000.00) in any fiscal year.

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

