

By: Senator(s) Boyd

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2529

1 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT
2 PROGRAM, TO SERVE AS A LAST-DOLLAR GRANT PROGRAM FOR ELIGIBLE
3 STUDENTS ENROLLED IN AN ACADEMIC CREDIT CERTIFICATE OR ASSOCIATE
4 DEGREE-SEEKING PROGRAM AT A PUBLICLY FUNDED COMMUNITY OR JUNIOR
5 COLLEGE AND PURSUING CREDENTIALS IN SPECIFIED EMPLOYMENT SECTORS;
6 TO PROVIDE THAT THE PROGRAM SHALL BE ADMINISTERED BY THE
7 MISSISSIPPI POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD; TO
8 PRESCRIBE THE CRITERIA TO DETERMINE A STUDENT'S ELIGIBILITY FOR
9 RECEIPT OF A MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT AWARD; TO SPECIFY
10 THE EMPLOYMENT SECTORS IDENTIFIED BY THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE
11 DEVELOPMENT (ACCELERATEMS) WHICH QUALIFY AS OCCUPATIONS FOR WHICH
12 GRANT FUNDS MAY BE AWARDED; TO REQUIRE RECIPIENTS TO BE ENROLLED
13 ON AT LEAST A HALF-TIME BASIS; TO PROVIDE THAT GRANT FUNDS SHALL
14 ONLY BE APPLIED TOWARD A STUDENT'S COST OF ATTENDANCE AFTER ALL
15 OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THE STUDENT'S COST
16 OF ATTENDANCE BALANCE; TO PRESCRIBE PENALTIES FOR FALSIFICATION OF
17 INFORMATION AS A MEANS OF PROCURING MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISES
18 GRANT FUNDS; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR A STUDENT'S CONTINUED
19 ELIGIBILITY UNDER THE PROGRAM; TO PRESCRIBE REQUIREMENTS FOR AN
20 INSTITUTION TO REMAIN ELIGIBLE FOR ITS STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN
21 THE MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT PROGRAM; TO LIMIT A STUDENT'S
22 ABILITY TO RECEIVE A MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT THAT EXCEEDS
23 THE EQUIVALENT NUMBER OF SEMESTERS OR QUARTERS REQUIRED TO
24 COMPLETE ONE CERTIFICATE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE PROGRAM; TO REQUIRE
25 PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND GRANT AWARDEES TO COMMIT TO TWO YEARS OF
26 EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI EMPLOYED IN AN
27 OCCUPATION WITHIN THE EMPLOYMENT SECTOR FOR WHICH HIS OR HER
28 CERTIFICATE OR DEGREE WAS CONFERRED; TO REQUIRE THE REPAYMENT OF
29 GRANT FUNDS FOR RECIPIENTS WHO FAILS TO UPHOLD THE EMPLOYMENT
30 COMMITMENT; TO ESTABLISH THE "MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT
31 FUND," IN THE STATE TREASURY AS A SPECIAL FUND FOR THE DEPOSIT OF
32 FUNDS APPROPRIATED BY THE LEGISLATURE AND ANY OTHER FUNDS FOR THE
33 PURPOSE OF IMPLEMENTING THE MISSISSIPPI CAREER PROMISE GRANT
34 PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

36 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the Mississippi Career
37 Promise Grant Program, to serve as a last-dollar grant program for
38 eligible students enrolled in a credit certificate or associate
39 degree-seeking program at a publicly funded community or junior
40 college by providing financial assistance to students pursuing
41 credentials in specified employment sectors, to be administered by
42 the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board
43 established under Section 37-106-9. The board shall set the dates
44 and deadlines for applying for an award under this section, and
45 shall establish such rules and regulations as it deems necessary
46 and proper to carry out the purposes and intent of this section.

47 (2) To be eligible to receive a Mississippi Career Promise
48 Grant Award, a student must meet the following qualifications:

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

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

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

61 (d) Have received acceptance for enrollment at any
62 publicly funded community or junior college located in this state
63 and approved by the board; and

64 (e) Declare as a major and be accepted into an
65 appropriate program of study in a key employment sector, as
66 determined by the Office of Workforce Development (AccelerateMS)
67 as having an average annual pay higher than the state average, and
68 where there exists sizable gaps between positions available and
69 positions filled, including, but not limited to, the following
70 employment sectors:

71 (i) Nursing (registered nurses (RN), licensed
72 practical nurses (LPN) and licensed vocational nurses (LVN));

73 (ii) Vehicle and mobile equipment mechanics,
74 installers and repairers;

75 (iii) Health technologists and technicians;
76 (iv) Industrial maintenance professionals;
77 (v) Specialty metal workers (computer numerical
78 control (CNC), tool and die, machinists);

79 (vi) Electricians;

80 (vii) Electrical and electronic equipment
81 mechanics, installers and repairers;

82 (viii) Lineworkers;

- (ix) Respiratory, radiation and other therapists;
- (x) Heating, air conditioning and refrigeration mechanics and installers;
- (xi) Electrical engineering drafting technician;

and

- (xii) Paramedics.

89 (3) The board shall approve Mississippi Advanced Career
90 Education Grant to eligible Mississippi residents who enroll, on
91 at least a half-time basis, at any publicly funded community or
92 junior college located in this state.

93 (4) Mississippi Career Promise Grants shall be applied to
94 tuition, rooms and meals, books, materials and fees not to exceed
95 the student's total cost of attendance, and shall only be applied
96 after all other financial assistance, both public and private, has
97 been applied toward the balance of the total cost of attendance.

98 (5) By accepting a Mississippi Career Promise Grant, the
99 student is attesting to the accuracy, completeness and correctness
100 of information provided to demonstrate the student's eligibility.
101 Falsification of such information shall result in the denial of
102 any pending grant and revocation of any award currently held to
103 the extent that no further payments shall be made. Any student
104 knowingly making false statements in order to receive a grant
105 shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable, upon conviction
106 thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), a
107 prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the county jail, or both,

108 and shall be required to return all Mississippi Career Promise
109 Grants wrongfully obtained.

110 (6) Eligibility for renewal of Mississippi Career Promise
111 Grants shall be evaluated at the end of each semester, or term, of
112 each academic year. As a condition for renewal, a student shall:

113 (a) Make steady academic progress toward a certificate
114 or degree, as outlined in the school Satisfactory Academic
115 Progress Standards and certified by the institution's registrar;
116 and

117 (b) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least
118 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester,
119 trimester or term.

120 (7) Payment of the Mississippi Career Promise Grant shall be
121 made payable to the recipient and the educational institution and
122 mailed directly to the institution.

123 (8) In order for an institution to remain eligible for its
124 students to participate in the Mississippi Career Promise Grant
125 Program, the institution shall comply with the following
126 requirements:

127 (a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility
128 status of each awarded student shall be made to the board for each
129 term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student
130 receives a Mississippi Career Promise Grant; and

131 (b) The board may conduct its own annual audits of any
132 institution participating in the Mississippi Career Promise Grant



133 Program. The board may suspend or revoke an institution's
134 eligibility to receive future monies under the program if it finds
135 that the institution has not complied with the provisions of this
136 section. In determining a student's initial eligibility, the
137 number of prior semesters enrolled will not be counted against the
138 student.

139 (9) No student may receive a Mississippi Career Promise
140 Grant for more than the equivalent semesters or quarters required
141 to complete one (1) certificate or associate degree program.

142 (10) (a) As a condition for participation in the program, a
143 grant recipient shall agree to employment within this state in an
144 occupation within the employment sector for which his or her
145 certificate or associate degree was conferred, as determined by
146 the Office of Workforce Development (AccelerateMS), for a period
147 of not less than two (2) years. Service rendered by a participant
148 as an employee in an identified employment sector before that
149 individual becomes a participant in the program or before he or
150 she receives a verifiable certification, credential, endorsement
151 or degree in a community college program may not be considered to
152 fulfill the employment commitment required under this subsection.

153 (b) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (c) of
154 this subsection, any person failing to comply with the employment
155 commitment required under paragraph (a) of this subsection within
156 a reasonable time, as promulgated in the rules and regulations by
157 the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance



158 Board, shall be deemed to be in breach of contract and become liable
159 immediately to the board for the sum of all grant funds awarded to
160 that person, less one-twenty-fourth (1/24) of the amount of that
161 sum for each month that service was rendered during the required
162 two-year employment period, plus interest accruing at the current
163 Stafford Loan rate at the time the breach occurs.

164 (c) The Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
165 Assistance Board may grant a deferral for cause to a program
166 participant when an occupation within an employment sector
167 identified in subsection (2) (e) for which his or her certificate
168 or associate degree was conferred requires the successful passage
169 of a licensing or certification examination as a condition of
170 employment. The period granted to any individual by the board
171 based on a deferral for cause shall not exceed six (6) months.
172 After the period of such deferral has expired, the person shall
173 begin employment in an occupation within the employment sector for
174 which his or her certificate or associate degree was conferred and
175 certification or licensure attained, or said person shall become
176 liable to the board as required under paragraph (b) of this
177 subsection.

178 (d) If a claim for repayment under this subsection is
179 placed in the hands of an attorney for collection after default,
180 then the obligor shall be liable for an additional amount equal to
181 a reasonable attorney's fee.

182 (11) All funds received by the Mississippi Postsecondary
183 Education Financial Assistance Board from the repayment of grant
184 awards by program participants shall be deposited in the
185 Mississippi Career Promise Grant Fund.

186 **SECTION 2.** There is established in the State Treasury a
187 special fund to be designated the "Mississippi Career Promise
188 Grant Fund," into which shall be deposited those funds
189 appropriated by the Legislature, and any other funds that may be
190 made available, for the purpose of implementing the program
191 established under Section 1 of this act. Monies in the fund at
192 the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the General Fund,
193 and interest earned on any amounts deposited into the fund shall
194 be credited to the special fund.

195 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
196 and after July 1, 2025.

