

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.



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

**SECTION 1.**

(1) There is established the Mississippi Career Promise Grant Program, to serve as a last-dollar grant program for eligible students enrolled in a credit certificate or associate degree-seeking program at a publicly funded community or junior college by providing financial assistance to students pursuing credentials in specified employment sectors, to be administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board established under Section 37-106-9. The board shall set the dates and deadlines for applying for an award under this section, and 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 a Mississippi Career Promise Grant 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 Mississippi Career Promise Grant 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;

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

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

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

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

(iii) Health technologists and technicians;

(iv) Industrial maintenance professionals;

(v) Specialty metal workers (computer numerical control (CNC), tool and die, machinists);

(vi) Electricians;

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

(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.

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

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

(5) By accepting a Mississippi Career Promise 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 misdemeanor punishable, upon conviction thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), a prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the county jail, or both,



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

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

