

By: Senator(s) Hopson, Polk,
Parks, Butler, DeBar, DeLano

To: Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2008

1 AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF
2 STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR THE SUPPORT AND
3 MAINTENANCE OF FINANCIAL AID SCHOLARSHIP, LOAN AND GRANT PROGRAMS
4 AND THE MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL AID, FOR FISCAL
5 YEAR 2026.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
8 necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State
9 General Fund not otherwise appropriated, to the Board of Trustees
10 of State Institutions of Higher Learning for the support and
11 maintenance of financial aid scholarship, loan and grant programs
12 authorized by law and administered by the Mississippi Office of
13 Student Financial Aid and for support of the Mississippi Office of
14 Student Financial Aid, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025,
15 and ending June 30, 2026.....\$ 47,255,243.00.

16 **SECTION 2.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
17 necessary, is hereby authorized out of the proceeds derived from
18 any federal funds, grants, donations, fees, or other special
19 source funds which are collected by or otherwise become available



20 for the support and maintenance of financial aid scholarship, loan
21 and grant programs authorized by law including funds used as
22 federal matching funds for the GEAR UP Mississippi Scholarship
23 Program and administered by the Mississippi Office of Student
24 Financial Aid and for support of the Mississippi Office of Student
25 Financial Aid, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and
26 ending June 30, 2026.....\$ 10,983,837.00.

27 **SECTION 3.** None of the funds appropriated in this act shall
28 be paid to or for the benefit of any student who applies for the
29 first time, subsequent to July 1, 2025, for assistance through the
30 Southeast Asia POW/MIA Grant established under the provisions of
31 Section 37-106-41, the Public Management Graduate Internship
32 established under the provisions of Section 37-106-43, the State
33 Medical Education Loan established under the provisions of Section
34 37-106-61, the State Dental Education Loan established under the
35 provisions of Section 37-106-63, the Graduate and Professional
36 Degree Forgivable Loan established under the provisions of Section
37 37-106-65, the Health Care Professions Forgivable Loan established
38 under the provisions of Section 37-106-67, or the Family
39 Protection Specialist Social Worker Forgivable Loan established
40 under the provisions of Section 37-106-69.

41 **SECTION 4.** It is the intention of the Legislature that of
42 the funds appropriated under the provisions of Section 1 of this
43 act, the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
44 Learning shall expend from the support of the out-of-state



45 graduate and professional studies program an amount not exceeding
46 the funding necessary, contingent upon the availability of
47 qualified applicants, for ten (10) new entering optometry students
48 and the number of returning optometry students who received
49 funding under the program during the preceding school year.

50 **SECTION 5.** In the allocation of funds appropriated under the
51 provisions of Sections 1 and 2 of this act, among the student
52 financial aid programs included herein, it is the intention of the
53 Legislature that priority shall be given and funds shall be first
54 allocated to all students eligible for financial aid under the
55 provisions of Section 37-106-39, Mississippi Code of 1972.

56 **SECTION 6.** All funds provided for in this act shall be
57 accounted for in an annual report, which shall be submitted at the
58 next regular session of the Legislature within ten (10) days after
59 the convening thereof. The report should detail for each grant,
60 scholarship, or loan program the number of recipients, the total
61 amount of awards made, and the average award amount. The report
62 shall include the number of students at each institution receiving
63 financial assistance and the amount of such assistance. For loan
64 programs, the report shall also include a summary of the repayment
65 status and method of repayment for student cohorts as well as an
66 accounting of the receipt of funds in repayment. Furthermore, all
67 funds received and expended shall be reported and otherwise
68 accounted for in accordance with the provisions of Section
69 37-106-11, Mississippi Code of 1972, except where individual



70 identifying information must be withheld pursuant to the Family
71 Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 USC Section 1232g
72 34 CFR Part 99.

73 No public or private institution of higher learning receiving
74 funds under the respective provisions of this act, for the purpose
75 of issuing scholarship grants or loans, shall issue any official
76 transcripts for any persons who have any amount of repayment in
77 arrears on the date such official transcript is requested.

78 **SECTION 7.** It is the intention of the Legislature that the
79 agency's budget request for Fiscal Year 2027 shall be submitted to
80 the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in a format and level of
81 detail comparable to the format and level of detail provided
82 during the Fiscal Year 2026 budget request process.

83 **SECTION 8.** Any funds appropriated pursuant to this act and
84 paid as a fee to or deposited in a financial institution shall be
85 in compliance with Section 109 of the Constitution of the State of
86 Mississippi and Section 25-4-105, Mississippi Code of 1972.

87 **SECTION 9.** It is the intention of the Legislature that
88 whenever two (2) or more bids are received by this agency for the
89 purchase of commodities or equipment, and whenever all things
90 stated in such received bids are equal with respect to price,
91 quality and service, the Mississippi Industries for the Blind
92 shall be given preference. A similar preference shall be given to
93 the Mississippi Industries for the Blind whenever purchases are
94 made without competitive bids.



95 **SECTION 10.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 1 of this
96 act, an amount not to exceed Seventy Thousand Dollars (\$70,000.00)
97 is provided for the Speech-Language Pathologists Loan Forgiveness
98 Program established under the provisions of Section 37-106-73,
99 Mississippi Code of 1972, and administered by the Mississippi
100 Office of Student Financial Aid.

101 **SECTION 11.** Awards for the Higher Education Legislative Plan
102 Grant Program, authorized by Section 37-106-75, shall be made to
103 applicants meeting all program requirements and found to be in
104 financial need according to the following definition:

105 (a) The family has one (1) child under the age of
106 twenty-one (21), and the annual adjusted gross income of the
107 family is less than Forty-two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars
108 (\$42,500.00); or

109 (b) The family has annual adjusted gross income of less
110 than Forty-two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$42,500.00) plus
111 Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each additional child under
112 the age of twenty-one (21).

113 **SECTION 12.** Of the funds appropriated in Section 2 of this
114 act, Three Million Dollars (\$3,000,000.00) shall be derived from
115 funds in the Education Enhancement Fund deposited pursuant to
116 Sections 27-65-75 and 27-67-31, Mississippi Code of 1972. This
117 amount shall be used for the Fostering Access and Inspiring True
118 Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Program Act established by Section
119 37-106-81, Mississippi Code of 1972, and the William F. Winter and



120 Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan Repayment Program established by
121 Section 37-106-36, Mississippi Code of 1972.

122 **SECTION 13.** It is the intention of the Legislature that no
123 student should receive undergraduate grant aid through more than
124 one state-supported undergraduate grant program in the same term
125 of enrollment. If a student is eligible for aid through multiple
126 grant programs, the student shall be awarded from the program that
127 awards the larger sum.

128 **SECTION 14.** It is the intention of the Legislature that all
129 students must demonstrate eligibility at the conclusion of each
130 term during the regular academic year in order to continue to
131 receive state-supported aid.

132 **SECTION 15.** The following sum, or so much thereof as may be
133 necessary, is reappropriated out of any money in the Education
134 Enhancement Fund not otherwise appropriated, to the Mississippi
135 Office of Student Financial Aid for the purpose of reauthorizing
136 the expenditure of Education Enhancement Funds to defray the
137 expenses of the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid, as
138 authorized in Senate Bill 3013, 2024 Regular Session, for the
139 fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025, and ending June 30, 2026.....
140\$ 250,000.00.

141 This appropriation is made for the purpose of reauthorizing
142 the expenditure of funds for the following:

143 (a) William F. Winter and Jack Reed, Sr., Teacher Loan
144 Repayment Program.....\$ 150,000.00



145 (b) Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH)
146 Scholarship Program Act.....\$ 100,000.00

147 Notwithstanding the amount reappropriated under this section,
148 the amount that may be expended under the authority of this
149 section shall not exceed the unexpended balance of the funds
150 remaining as of June 30, 2025, from the amount authorized for the
151 previous fiscal year. In addition, this reappropriation shall not
152 change the purpose for which the funds were originally authorized.

153 **SECTION 16.** The money herein appropriated shall be paid by
154 the State Treasurer out of any money in the State Treasury to the
155 credit of the proper fund or funds as set forth in this act, upon
156 warrants issued by the State Fiscal Officer, and the State Fiscal
157 Officer shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the
158 proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

159 **SECTION 17.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
160 and after July 1, 2025.

