

By: Representatives Brown, Scott (80th)

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 337

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-31, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,
2 TO AUTHORIZE PERSONS TO INITIALLY APPLY FOR A SCHOLARSHIP UNDER
3 THE MISSISSIPPI EMINENT SCHOLARS PROGRAM DURING THE THREE YEARS
4 FOLLOWING THEIR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION IN ADDITION TO DURING THEIR
5 SENIOR YEAR; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-31, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
8 amended as follows:

9 37-106-31. (1) There is created a Mississippi Eminent
10 Scholars Fund, to be administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary
11 Education Financial Assistance Board established under Section
12 37-106-9. The board shall set the date that will serve as the
13 deadline for applying for an award under this section and award
14 scholarships to each Mississippi student who:

15 (a) (i) Is recognized by the merit or achievement
16 programs of the National Merit Scholarship Corporation or the
17 National Achievement Scholarship as a semifinalist or finalist,
18 and has obtained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5
19 calculated on a 4.0 scale in high school subjects acceptable for
20 credit toward a diploma, after seven (7) semesters certified by
21 the high school counselor or other authorized school official on
22 the application and graduation from high school verified by the
23 institution before disbursement of award; or

24 (ii) Has scored twenty-nine (29) on the American
25 College Testing Program or its equivalent and has obtained a
26 minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 calculated on a 4.0
27 scale after seven (7) semesters certified by the high school
28 counselor or other authorized school official on the application



29 and graduation from high school verified by the institution before
30 disbursement of award, or the equivalent in high school subjects
31 acceptable for credit toward a diploma; or

32 (iii) Has attended a home education program during
33 grade levels 9 through 12 and has scored twenty-nine (29) on the
34 American College Testing Program or its equivalent; and

35 (iv) Has been certified by the college or
36 university to the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial
37 Assistance Board as a Mississippi Eminent Scholar.

38 (b) Meets the general requirements for student
39 eligibility, except as otherwise provided in this section.

40 (c) Dependents of Mississippi residents who are on
41 military or public service assignments away from Mississippi when
42 such dependents live with such Mississippi residents and receive
43 high school diplomas from non-Mississippi schools shall be
44 exempted.

45 (d) Files, before the deadline, an application for an
46 award during his last year in high school, or before the
47 expiration of the third school year succeeding the year of his
48 high school graduation.

49 (e) Attends, on a full-time basis, any state
50 institution of higher learning or public community or junior
51 college, or any regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit
52 four- or two-year college or university located in the State of
53 Mississippi as listed in subsection (4) (d) of Section 37-106-29.

54 (f) Enrolls for the first time as a * * * college
55 student in Mississippi. Any student who earns postsecondary
56 academic credit prior to or during the summer immediately
57 subsequent to receiving a high school diploma, who is dually
58 enrolled in secondary and postsecondary educational institutions,
59 or who is enrolled in the early admission program of a
60 postsecondary institution shall be exempt from this requirement.



61 (g) Is a resident of the State of Mississippi.
62 Residency status for purposes of receiving grants under this
63 section shall be determined in the same manner as resident status
64 for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections 37-103-1 through
65 37-103-29, with the exception of Section 37-103-17.

66 (2) (a) Students who apply for awards but do not accept
67 their initial awards may * * * reapply to receive awards during
68 subsequent application periods occurring before the expiration of
69 the third school year succeeding the year of their high school
70 graduation. Similarly, students who receive initial awards and
71 who later do not accept renewal awards may reapply to receive
72 awards during subsequent application periods occurring before the
73 expiration of the third school year succeeding the year of their
74 high school graduation. The institution shall accept
75 reinstatement applications according to dates set by the
76 Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board and
77 shall determine the eligibility of such applicants in the same
78 manner as first-time applicants, except that students who apply
79 pursuant to this paragraph shall be required to have maintained
80 the equivalent of a 3.5 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0
81 scale for all college work attempted. The board shall not make
82 awards to reinstatement applicants who submit applications that
83 are received after the deadline set by the Mississippi
84 Postsecondary Education Financial Assistance Board.

85 (b) The board shall create a renewal application for
86 each student who received the award for one or more terms during
87 the immediately preceding academic year.

88 (3) (a) The annual award to a student shall be up to Two
89 Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$2,500.00) for tuition and fees.
90 Payment of the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant shall be made
91 payable to the recipient and the educational institution and
92 mailed directly to the institution, to be applied first to
93 tuition.



94 (b) Within six (6) weeks of the end of regular
95 registration, inclusive of a drop-add period, institutions shall
96 certify to the board the eligibility status of each awarded
97 student. The eligibility status of each student to receive a
98 disbursement shall be determined by each institution as of this
99 date. Institutions shall not be required to reevaluate a
100 student's eligibility status after this date for purposes of
101 amending eligibility determinations previously made. However, an
102 institution shall be requested to make refunds for students who
103 receive award disbursements and terminate enrollment for any
104 reason during the academic term when an institution's refund
105 policies permit a student to receive a refund under the
106 circumstances.

107 (c) Institutions shall certify to the board the amount
108 of funds disbursed to each student and shall remit to the board
109 any undisbursed advances within sixty (60) days of the end of
110 regular registration.

111 (4) A recipient shall maintain the equivalent of a 3.5
112 cumulative grade point average on a 4.0 scale, or shall maintain
113 an approved equivalent student progress evaluation plan, on at
114 least twelve (12) hours per quarter, trimester or semester in
115 order to be eligible for a continuation of the award. No student
116 may receive a Mississippi Eminent Scholars' Fund award for more
117 than the equivalent semesters or quarters required to complete one
118 (1) degree or certificate program per institution. The award may
119 be renewed annually upon certification of eligibility by the
120 eligible institutions that the recipient meets the necessary
121 qualifications. If any recipient transfers from one university,
122 community college or junior college to another, his award will be
123 transferable, provided he is otherwise eligible for the award. If
124 a student fails to maintain continuous enrollment, and is not
125 granted an exception for cause by the administering agency, the
126 student is ineligible to receive the Mississippi Eminent Scholars



127 Grant during the following semester or trimester or term of the
128 regular academic year.

129 (5) The board may conduct its own annual audits of any
130 institution participating in the Mississippi Eminent Scholars
131 Grant Program. The board may suspend or revoke an institution's
132 eligibility to receive future monies under the program if it finds
133 that the institution has not complied with the provisions of this
134 section.

135 (6) For purposes of this section, certificated shall mean
136 but not be limited to all postsecondary vocational programs in
137 eligible institutions as identified in subsection (4)(d) of
138 Section 37-106-29.

139 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
140 and after July 1, 2002.

