

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.

