

By: Representative Aldridge (By Request)

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

HOUSE BILL NO. 1386

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR UNDERSERVED
2 RESIDENTS (SPUR); TO ESTABLISH REQUIREMENTS FOR STUDENTS TO
3 QUALIFY FOR SPUR; TO PROVIDE A LIMIT ON THE SCHOLARSHIP AMOUNT; TO
4 PROVIDE CRIMINAL PENALTIES FOR MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS IN ORDER TO
5 RECEIVE A SCHOLARSHIP; TO PROVIDE FOR THE ELIGIBILITY FOR RENEWAL
6 OF A SCHOLARSHIP; TO PROVIDE THAT PAYMENTS OF FUNDS AWARDED SHALL
7 BE APPLIED TO TUITION FIRST; TO PROVIDE REQUIREMENTS FOR
8 INSTITUTIONS TO BE ELIGIBLE IN ORDER FOR ITS STUDENTS TO
9 PARTICIPATE IN SPUR; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** A student who qualifies for the Scholarship
12 Program for Underserved Residents (SPUR) shall be any student:

13 (a) Whose family's prior year adjusted gross income
14 (AGI) does not exceed the maximum allowed to qualify for full Pell
15 Grant eligibility and college-campus-based federal aid; and

16 (b) Was enrolled in the previous school year in a
17 school whose achievement classification is Level 1 or Level 2
18 according to the Mississippi Department of Education.

19 **SECTION 2.** A scholarship awarded under this program may be
20 used by a qualified student at any school chosen by the parent(s)
21 of such students, so long as the school is accredited by a
22 legitimate accreditation body.

23 **SECTION 3.** The scholarship shall not exceed Three Thousand
24 Dollars (\$3,000.00) in any school year for which the scholarship
25 was granted. It shall be applied to tuition, meals, books,
26 materials, or fees. The administering agency shall disburse half
27 of the scholarship amount at the beginning of each semester, or
28 one-third (1/3) of the scholarship amount at the beginning of each
29 trimester.

30 **SECTION 4.** By accepting a scholarship under this program,
31 the student and the parent(s) of the student are attesting to the
32 accuracy, completeness and correctness of information provided to
33 demonstrate the student's eligibility. Falsification of such
34 information shall result in the denial of any pending scholarship
35 and revocation of any award currently held to the extent that no
36 further payments shall be made. Any student or parent of a
37 student who knowingly makes false statements in order to receive a
38 grant shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable, upon conviction
39 thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00), a
40 prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the county jail, or both,
41 and shall be required to return all funds under this program that
42 were wrongfully obtained.

43 **SECTION 5.** Eligibility for renewal of a scholarship under
44 this program shall be evaluated at the end of each semester, or
45 term, of each academic year. As a condition for renewal, a
46 student shall:

47 (a) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than
48 two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters in each successive
49 academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the
50 administering agency. If a student fails to maintain continuous
51 enrollment, and is not granted an exception for cause by the
52 administering agency, the student is ineligible to receive a
53 scholarship under this program during the following semester or
54 trimester or term of the regular academic year.

55 (b) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least
56 2.00 or its equivalent calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of
57 each semester or trimester or term.

58 **SECTION 6.** Each student, each year, must complete an
59 application for a scholarship under this program as designed by
60 the administering agency to determine his/her eligibility.

61 **SECTION 7.** Payment of the funds awarded under this program
62 shall be made payable to the recipient and the educational

63 institution and mailed directly to the institution, to be applied
64 first to tuition.

65 **SECTION 8.** In order to remain eligible for its students to
66 participate in this program, the institution shall comply with the
67 following requirements:

68 (a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility
69 status of each awarded student shall be made to the agency for
70 each term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student
71 receives a scholarship under this program;

72 (b) The institution is required to make refunds to the
73 administering agency for any funds which have not been disbursed
74 to the recipient, in the case of students who have received a
75 grant but who terminate enrollment during the academic term,
76 semester or quarter of the academic year if an institution's
77 refund policies permit a student to receive a refund in such
78 instances. the recipient shall be responsible for the refund of
79 any funds which have been disbursed by the institution in such
80 instance;

81 (c) If a student drops below full-time status but does
82 not terminate all enrollment during the term, semester or quarter
83 of the academic year no refund will be required for that term.
84 However, that student is ineligible to receive a scholarship under
85 this program during the following term, semester or quarter of the
86 regular academic year; and

87 (d) The administering agency may conduct its own annual
88 audits of any institution participating in the program, but such
89 audits shall be limited to ensuring that the provisions of this
90 act have been complied with. The agency may suspend or revoke an
91 institution's eligibility to receive future monies under the
92 program if it finds that the institution has not complied with the
93 provisions of this act.

94 **SECTION 9.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
95 and after July 1, 2005.