

By: Representative Robinson (84th)

To: Military Affairs;
Universities and Colleges

HOUSE BILL NO. 699

1 AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE WAIVER OF TUITION AT THE STATE
2 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING AND THE COMMUNITY AND JUNIOR
3 COLLEGES FOR CERTAIN DISABLED VETERANS OF THE UNITED STATES ARMED
4 FORCES; TO REQUIRE APPLICATIONS FOR A WAIVER TO INCLUDE
5 DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING AN APPLICANT'S DISABILITY; TO PROVIDE
6 THAT TUITION MAY BE WAIVED FOR BOTH FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME
7 STUDENTS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE
8 INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING SHALL BE THE ADMINISTERING AGENCY
9 OF THE TUITION WAIVER PROGRAM; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) Beginning with the 2007-2008 academic year,
12 any resident of the State of Mississippi who is an honorably
13 discharged veteran of the United States Armed Forces who has a
14 service-connected disability that is permanently and no less than
15 seventy percent (70%) disabling according to the rules and
16 regulations of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs
17 may apply for a waiver of tuition at any state institution of
18 higher learning or public community or junior college in the
19 state.

20 (2) A veteran who qualifies for a tuition waiver under this
21 section who is enrolled in or accepted for enrollment at a state
22 institution of higher learning or a public community or junior
23 college in Mississippi may apply for a waiver of tuition. An
24 application must be accompanied by proper proof that the applicant
25 is an honorably discharged veteran of the United States Armed
26 Forces and that the veteran has a service-connected disability
27 that is permanently and no less than seventy percent (70%)
28 disabling according to the rules and regulations of the United
29 States Department of Veterans Affairs.

30 (3) A waiver of tuition awarded under this section may not
31 exceed the actual cost of tuition at the institution or college at
32 which the veteran is enrolled or accepted for enrollment. For
33 purposes of this section, the term "tuition" means the semester,
34 trimester or term charges and does not include books, housing,
35 food, school supplies, materials, dues or fees for
36 extra-curricular activities. Both full-time and part-time
37 students may apply for a waiver under this section. Students
38 enrolling on a full-time basis may receive a maximum of four (4)
39 annual waivers, and in those instances when a degree program
40 requires five (5) years for completion, five (5) annual waivers.
41 The number of waivers which may be made to a student attending
42 school on a part-time basis may not exceed the length of time
43 required to complete the associate or baccalaureate degree or
44 certificate program toward which the student is working. A person
45 who has a baccalaureate degree is not eligible for a waiver of
46 tuition under this section, and any person who has an associate
47 degree may receive waivers only in furtherance of a baccalaureate
48 degree.

49 (4) As a condition for renewal of a waiver of tuition, a
50 student must make steady academic progress toward a certificate or
51 associate or baccalaureate degree, as certified by the
52 institution's registrar, and must maintain a cumulative grade
53 point average of at least 2.00 calculated on a 4.00 scale at the
54 end of each term.

55 (5) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
56 Learning and the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges
57 jointly shall promulgate rules and regulations necessary to carry
58 out the purposes of this section. The Board of Trustees of State
59 Institutions of Higher Learning is the administering agency of the
60 tuition waiver program.

61 (6) It is the intent of the Legislature that all veterans
62 who are eligible for a waiver of tuition under this section be

63 granted a waiver. If funding at a state institution or community
64 or junior college is insufficient to provide a waiver of tuition
65 for all eligible applicants at that institution or college, the
66 board shall grant the tuition waivers to first-time students on a
67 first-come, first-served basis; however, priority consideration
68 must be given to persons previously receiving waivers under this
69 section who are making steady academic progress toward completion
70 of a certificate program or associate or baccalaureate degree.

71 **SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
72 and after July 1, 2007.