

By: Senator(s) Nunnelee

To: Universities and  
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2237

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-29, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO INCREASE THE TUITION AMOUNTS UNDER THE MISSISSIPPI RESIDENT  
3 TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANT (M.T.A.G.) PROGRAM FOR FRESHMAN AND  
4 SOPHOMORE STUDENTS TO \$1,000.00 PER TERM; AND FOR RELATED  
5 PURPOSES.

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

7 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-29, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
8 amended as follows:

9 37-106-29. (1) There is established the Mississippi  
10 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program for college or  
11 university freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors to be  
12 administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial  
13 Assistance Board established under Section 37-106-9, Mississippi  
14 Code of 1972, which shall set the dates and deadlines for applying  
15 for an award under this section. The board shall establish such  
16 rules and regulations as it deems necessary and proper to carry  
17 out the purposes and intent of this section.

18 (2) The college or university shall approve grants to  
19 full-time freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior Mississippi  
20 residents who meet the general requirements for student  
21 eligibility as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

22 (3) Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants shall be  
23 for Mississippi students from any Mississippi family whose prior  
24 year adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to  
25 qualify for full Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal  
26 aid. Those Mississippi students receiving less than the full Pell  
27 Grant award, as determined by the institution, shall receive a  
28 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant in an amount not to

29 exceed the maximum Pell Grant allowable for that individual  
30 student. The award shall be applied to tuition, rooms and meals,  
31 books, materials and fees not to exceed One Thousand Dollars  
32 (\$1,000.00) for freshman, sophomore, junior and senior students  
33 attending state institutions of higher learning in Mississippi, or  
34 two-year or four-year regionally accredited, state-approved,  
35 nonprofit colleges and universities in Mississippi, \* \* \* or  
36 public community or junior colleges in Mississippi, \* \* \* which  
37 will be prorated per term, semester or quarter of the academic  
38 year for costs of attendance, calculated according to the formula  
39 specified in subsection (8) of this section.

40 (4) The general requirements for initial eligibility of  
41 students for Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants  
42 consist of the following:

43 (a) Member of a Mississippi family whose prior year  
44 adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to qualify  
45 for Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal aid.

46 (b) Acceptance for enrollment at any state institution  
47 of higher learning or public community or junior college located  
48 in Mississippi, or any regionally accredited, state-approved,  
49 nonprofit four- or two-year college or university located in  
50 Mississippi as listed in subsection (d) of this Section

51 37-106-29(4): (i) a minimum grade point average of 2.5 calculated  
52 on a 4.0 scale after seven (7) semesters certified by the high  
53 school counselor or other authorized school official on the  
54 application and graduation from high school verified by the  
55 institution before disbursement of award and has scored fifteen  
56 (15) on the American College Test Program (ACT); or (ii) has  
57 attended a home education program during grade levels 9 through  
58 12, and has scored fifteen (15) on the American College Testing  
59 Program; or (iii) satisfactory completion of the General  
60 Educational Development Test (GED) or have successfully completed  
61 the International Baccalaureate Program and has scored fifteen

62 (15) on the American College Testing Program; provided, however,  
63 that any student entering a vocational or technical program of  
64 study, or who has satisfactorily completed the General Education  
65 Development Test and attends a community or junior college will  
66 not be required to have a test score under the American College  
67 Testing Program except those students enrolled in courses of  
68 academic study. Any student currently enrolled in any qualified  
69 institution shall have to only meet the same requirements as  
70 students who are applying for a renewal award.

71 (c) Resident status for purposes of receiving grants  
72 under this section shall be determined in the same manner as  
73 resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections  
74 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, with the exception of Section  
75 37-103-17.

76 (d) Must attend one (1) of the following institutions  
77 of higher learning: Alcorn State University, Delta State  
78 University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State  
79 University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley  
80 State University, University of Mississippi, University of  
81 Southern Mississippi, Coahoma Community College, Copiah-Lincoln  
82 Community College, East Central Community College, East  
83 Mississippi Community College, Hinds Community College, Holmes  
84 Community College, Itawamba Community College, Jones County Junior  
85 College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Delta Community  
86 College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Northeast  
87 Mississippi Community College, Northwest Mississippi Community  
88 College, Pearl River Community College, Southwest Mississippi  
89 Community College, Belhaven College, Blue Mountain College,  
90 Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Rust College, Tougaloo  
91 College, William Carey College, Mary Holmes College, Magnolia  
92 Bible College, Wood College and Wesley College.

93 (5) By accepting a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance  
94 Grant, the student is attesting to the accuracy, completeness and

95 correctness of information provided to demonstrate the student's  
96 eligibility. Falsification of such information shall result in  
97 the denial of any pending grant and revocation of any award  
98 currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be  
99 made. Any student knowingly making false statements in order to  
100 receive a grant shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable, upon  
101 conviction thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars  
102 (\$10,000.00), a prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the  
103 county jail, or both, and shall be required to return all  
104 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants wrongfully  
105 obtained.

106 (6) Eligibility for renewal of Mississippi Resident Tuition  
107 Assistance Grants shall be evaluated at the end of each semester,  
108 or term, of each academic year. As a condition for renewal, a  
109 student shall:

110 (a) Make steady academic progress toward a certificate  
111 or degree, as outlined in the school Satisfactory Academic  
112 Progress Standards and certified by the institution's registrar.

113 (b) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than  
114 two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters in each successive  
115 academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the  
116 administering agency; examples of cause may include student  
117 participation in a cooperative program, internship program or  
118 foreign study program. If a student fails to maintain continuous  
119 enrollment, and is not granted an exception for cause by the  
120 administering agency, the student is ineligible to receive the  
121 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following  
122 semester or trimester or term of the regular academic year.

123 (c) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least  
124 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester or  
125 trimester or term.

126 (7) Each student, each year, must complete a Free  
127 Application for Federal Student Aid form or a Statement of

128 Certification as designed by the administering board to determine  
129 his/her eligibility for a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance  
130 Grant.

131 (8) (a) The amount of the Mississippi Resident Tuition  
132 Assistance Grant awarded to any one (1) student, up to the maximum  
133 amount provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall be the  
134 difference of the student's cost of attendance at his accredited  
135 college of choice and the amount of federal aid such student may  
136 receive, not to supplant but to supplement the amount of any  
137 federal aid awarded to the student. Cost of attendance is the  
138 tuition and fees of the applicable institution plus an allowance  
139 for room and meals and books and materials.

140 (b) Payment of the Mississippi Resident Tuition  
141 Assistance Grant shall be made payable to the recipient and the  
142 educational institution and mailed directly to the institution, to  
143 be applied first to tuition.

144 (9) In order for an institution to remain eligible for its  
145 students to participate in the Mississippi Resident Tuition  
146 Assistance Grant Program, the institution shall comply with the  
147 following requirements:

148 (a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility  
149 status of each awarded student shall be made to the board for each  
150 term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student  
151 receives a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant.

152 (b) The institution is required to make refunds to the  
153 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Fund for any funds  
154 which have not been disbursed to the recipient, in the case of  
155 students who have received a grant but who terminate enrollment  
156 during the academic term, semester or quarter of the academic year  
157 if an institution's refund policies permit a student to receive a  
158 refund in such instance. The recipient shall be responsible for  
159 the refund of any funds which have been disbursed by the  
160 institution in such instance.

161 (c) If a student drops below full-time status but does  
162 not terminate all enrollment during the term, semester or quarter  
163 of the academic year no refund will be required for that term.  
164 However, that student is ineligible to receive the Mississippi  
165 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following term,  
166 semester or quarter of the regular academic year.

167 (d) The board may conduct its own annual audits of any  
168 institution participating in the Mississippi Resident Tuition  
169 Assistance Grant Program. The board may suspend or revoke an  
170 institution's eligibility to receive future monies under the  
171 program if it finds that the institution has not complied with the  
172 provisions of this section. In determining a student's initial  
173 eligibility, the number of prior semesters enrolled will not be  
174 counted against the student.

175 (10) No student may receive a Mississippi Resident Tuition  
176 Assistance Grant for more than the equivalent semesters or  
177 quarters required to complete one (1) baccalaureate degree or one  
178 (1) certificate or associate degree program per institution.

179 (11) Subject to the availability of funds specifically  
180 appropriated therefor, it is the intent of the Legislature to  
181 fully fund grant awards to eligible students. If funds are  
182 insufficient to fully fund grant awards to eligible students,  
183 grant awards shall be prorated among all eligible students. No  
184 student shall receive any combination of student financial aid in  
185 excess of the cost of attendance as defined in subsection (8)(a).

186 (12) No student receiving a Mississippi Eminent Scholars  
187 Grant as provided in Section 37-106-31 shall be eligible to  
188 receive the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant pursuant  
189 to Section 37-106-29 unless he is eligible for such award after  
190 the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant has been considered by the  
191 board when conducting an assessment of the financial resources  
192 available to the student. In no case shall any student receive

193 any combination of student financial aid that would exceed the  
194 cost of attendance, as defined in subsection (8)(a).

195 For purposes of this section, certificated shall mean, but  
196 not be limited to, all postsecondary vocational programs in  
197 eligible institutions as identified in subsection (4)(d) of this  
198 section.

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