

By: Representatives Bennett, Creekmore To: Education;
 IV, Mickens, Crawford, Crudup, Summers, Appropriations
 McLean, Porter, Powell, Williamson,
 McCarty, Aguirre, Anderson (110th),
 Anderson (122nd), Anthony, Arnold,
 Bailey, Bain, Banks, Barnett, Barton, Beckett, Bell (21st), Bell
 (65th), Blackmon, Bomgar, Bounds, Boyd, Brown (70th), Burnett,
 Busby, Byrd, Calvert, Carpenter, Clark, Clarke, Cockerham,
 Criswell, Currie, Darnell, Denton, Deweese, Eubanks, Eure, Evans
 (45th), Evans (91st), Faulkner, Felsher, Ford (54th), Ford (73rd),
 Foster, Gibbs (36th), Gibbs (72nd), Goodin, Guice, Gunn, Hale,
 Haney, Harness, Hines, Hobgood-Wilkes, Holloway, Hood, Horan,
 Horne, Huddleston, Jackson, Johnson, Karriem, Kinkade, Ladner,
 Lamar, Lancaster, Mangold, Massengill, McCray, McGee, McKnight,
 McLeod, Miles, Mims, Morgan, Newman, Oliver, Osborne, Owen, Paden,
 Patterson, Pigott, Read, Reynolds, Roberson, Robinson, Rosebud,
 Rushing, Sanders, Sanford, Scoggin, Scott, Shanks, Smith, Stamps,
 Steverson, Straughter, Taylor, Thompson, Tubb, Tullos, Turner,
 Walker, Wallace, Watson, Weathersby, White, Williams-Barnes,
 Wright, Yancey, Yates, Young, Zuber

HOUSE BILL NO. 1313
 (As Passed the House)

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE "STATE REPRESENTATIVE BILL KINKADE
 2 FOSTERING ACCESS AND INSPIRING TRUE HOPE (FAITH) SCHOLARSHIP
 3 PROGRAM ACT," TO PROVIDE TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR ATTENDANCE AT
 4 APPROVED POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OR PUBLIC
 5 WORKFORCE TRAINING PROGRAMS TO ELIGIBLE STUDENTS WHO WERE ENTERED
 6 INTO FOSTER CARE ON OR AFTER REACHING 14 YEARS OF AGE AND WHO HAVE
 7 NOT REACHED 26 YEARS OF AGE OR LIVED AT A QUALIFIED RESIDENTIAL
 8 CHILD CARE AGENCY AFTER REACHING 14 YEARS OF AGE AND WHO HAVE NOT
 9 REACHED 26 YEARS OF AGE; TO PROVIDE THAT THE MISSISSIPPI
 10 POSTSECONDARY STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BOARD SHALL ADMINISTER
 11 THE PROGRAM; TO PRESCRIBE THE CRITERIA FOR INITIAL AND CONTINUED
 12 ELIGIBILITY FOR RECEIPT OF A FAITH SCHOLARSHIP; TO PROVIDE THAT
 13 THE NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS ALLOWED SHALL BE LIMITED TO 150 NEW
 14 RECIPIENTS PER YEAR UNTIL THE PROGRAM REACHES A MAXIMUM OF 900
 15 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS; TO REQUIRE APPROVED POSTSECONDARY
 16 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION TO PROVIDE SUMMER AND HOLIDAY ROOM AND
 17 BOARD ACCOMMODATION FOR RECIPIENTS OF FAITH SCHOLARSHIPS; AND FOR
 18 RELATED PURPOSES.

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



20 **SECTION 1.** This chapter shall be known and may be cited as
21 the "State Representative Bill Kinkade Fostering Access and
22 Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship Program Act."

23 **SECTION 2.** As used in this chapter, the following terms
24 shall have the meaning ascribed in this section, unless context of
25 use clearly requires otherwise:

26 (a) "Approved postsecondary educational institution"
27 means any public state-supported institution of higher learning,
28 community or junior college, or public workforce training
29 facility. The term does not include private or proprietary
30 colleges or universities.

31 (b) "Board" means the Mississippi Postsecondary Student
32 Financial Assistance Board established in Section 37-106-9, which
33 is authorized and empowered to administer the provisions of
34 Chapter 106, Title 37, Mississippi Code of 1972.

35 (c) "Director" means the individual designated by the
36 Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning to
37 administer the provisions of the various financial assistance
38 programs by promulgating the necessary rules and regulations for
39 their effective administration.

40 (d) "Department" means the Mississippi Department of
41 Child Protection Services.

42 (e) "Eligible student" means:

43 (i) Any individual, currently or formerly in the
44 state foster care program, who entered such program after



45 attaining the age of fourteen (14) years but has not reached
46 twenty-six (26) years of age, and who meets all initial or
47 continuing eligibility requirements of the scholarship and enrolls
48 in an approved postsecondary educational institution; or

49 (ii) Any individual who is not currently or
50 formerly in the state foster care program, who was placed by their
51 parent or parents, guardian, court of competent jurisdiction, or
52 other person or individual or entity acting in the best interest
53 of the individual in a qualified residential child care agency
54 before reaching their twenty-sixth birthday and who did reside in
55 such a residential child care agency after their fourteenth
56 birthday, and who meets all initial or continuing eligibility
57 requirements of the scholarship and enrolls in an approved
58 postsecondary educational institution; or

59 (iii) Any individual adopted from the state foster
60 care program, or adopted while residing at a residential child
61 care agency as described in subsection (2) at the age of fourteen
62 (14) and who has not reached twenty-six (26) years of age.

63 (f) "Qualified residential child care agency" means an
64 entity that provides a home for children and is licensed by the
65 Mississippi Department of Child Protection Services.

66 (g) "Scholarship" means the Fostering Access and
67 Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) Scholarship.

68 **SECTION 3.** (1) The Mississippi Postsecondary Student
69 Financial Assistance Board, with the assistance of the Mississippi



70 Department Child Protection Services shall develop and administer
71 the Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) scholarship
72 program for eligible students. Commencing with the 2023-2024
73 academic year, the program, on behalf of participants, shall do
74 either of the following:

75 (a) Pay for tuition and required fees at any public
76 two-year or four-year approved postsecondary educational
77 institution in the state; or

78 (b) Pay required fees for job training courses or skill
79 certifications that are offered by any public two-year or
80 four-year approved postsecondary educational institution in the
81 state, or other publicly funded workforce training programs in the
82 state which are not considered an associate's degree program,
83 provided that the courses or certifications are first approved by
84 the board.

85 (2) Payments of tuition and required fees are considered
86 program scholarships.

87 **SECTION 4.** The scholarship program shall include a mentor
88 service administered by the department as a support system for
89 participants of the Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope
90 (FAITH) scholarship program. This service shall include mentors
91 who shall be compensated by the department, as employees or
92 contractors, to help participants adapt to independent living,
93 academics and other college or university activities.



94 **SECTION 5.** (1) Appropriations for the program shall be used
95 by the board on behalf of participants in each fiscal year to pay
96 public two-year and four-year approved postsecondary educational
97 institutions or other publicly funded workforce training programs
98 in the state for benefits extended to eligible students by the
99 Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) scholarship
100 program. The department may not spend appropriations for the
101 program for purposes other than those listed in this section. Any
102 monies appropriated to the department for FAITH scholarships that
103 are unspent at the end of a fiscal year shall not lapse into the
104 State General Fund, but shall be carried over and be available for
105 expenditure by the board in the succeeding fiscal year, subject to
106 appropriation therefor by the Legislature. The board shall
107 develop rules for ensuring that expenses of the FAITH scholarship
108 program in a fiscal year do not exceed funding for the program in
109 that fiscal year. For that purpose, and any other provision of
110 this chapter to the contrary notwithstanding, the board may limit
111 the acceptance of applications for FAITH scholarships and may
112 limit the award of scholarships.

113 (2) Initial recipients shall be selected on a first-come,
114 first-served basis of all eligible applicants, which shall be
115 limited to only one hundred fifty (150) individuals receiving
116 scholarship funds. In the second and subsequent years of an
117 applicant's continued eligibility, priority consideration shall
118 first be given to renewal applicants. In any given year only one



119 hundred fifty (150) new applicants shall be eligible to receive
120 funds under the program, until the program reaches its maximum
121 limitation of nine hundred (900) scholarship recipients.

122 **SECTION 6.** The program shall pay one hundred percent (100%)
123 of the tuition and required fees, including room and board, and if
124 available, a meal plan, for an eligible student as governed by
125 rules promulgated by the board, in conjunction with the
126 department. In no event shall tuition and required fees be paid
127 pursuant to this section for more than seventy-two (72) academic
128 credit hours toward an associate's degree or one hundred
129 forty-four (144) academic credit hours toward a bachelor's degree
130 for each participant. The program shall only pay tuition and fees
131 relating to an undergraduate degree. Scholarship funds may be
132 disbursed only if sufficient funding for the FAITH scholarship
133 program is available.

134 **SECTION 7.** (1) (a) To be eligible to participate in the
135 program, a scholarship applicant shall satisfy all of the
136 following:

137 (i) Be in the legal custody of the foster care
138 program of the department at the time of graduation from high
139 school or earning a General Educational Development (GED) high
140 school equivalency certification; or residing in a qualified
141 residential child care agency as described in Section 2(e)(ii) of
142 this act at the time of graduation for high school or earning a
143 General Educational Development (GED) high school equivalency



144 certification; or in the permanent legal custody of the foster
145 care program of the department when his or her adoption is
146 finalized, on or after his or her fourteenth birthday, and has
147 graduated from high school or earned a GED certification;

148 (ii) Is younger than twenty-six (26) years of age
149 at the start of the semester, workforce training program or
150 certification program for which tuition or fees are requested from
151 the program;

152 (iii) Is accepted for enrollment in a
153 degree-granting, workforce training or certification program, or
154 is enrolled and working toward a degree, certificate, or
155 completion of a job training program, at a public two-year or
156 four-year approved postsecondary educational institution or
157 publicly funded workforce training program in the state; and

158 (iv) Has completed and submitted to the United
159 States Department of Education a Free Application for Federal
160 Student Aid (FAFSA), or the equivalent, before each year in which
161 he or she receives a FAITH scholarship. He or she shall have
162 applied for all federal student financial aid grants, including
163 Pell grants, Supplemental Education Opportunity Grants and
164 Education and Training Vouchers, identified as being available for
165 the student's application by the board or by the Office of Federal
166 Student Aid within the United States Department of Education, or
167 its successor agency.



168 (b) In addition to satisfying the eligibility
169 requirements of paragraph (a) of this section, any scholarship
170 applicant who earns less than an 18 ACT composite score or less
171 than a 2.5 GPA after his or her high school graduation must begin
172 his or her postsecondary education at a community or junior
173 college or workforce training program.

174 (2) To remain eligible for participation in the program
175 after the first year of enrollment at an approved postsecondary
176 educational institution or working training program, an applicant
177 shall:

178 (a) Make adequate progress toward the completion of a
179 degree, certification, or workforce training program as determined
180 by rules promulgated by the board, by maintaining a 2.0 GPA for
181 consecutive or nonconsecutive semesters of enrollment, up to six
182 (6) years, except as otherwise provided in subsection (4) of this
183 section;

184 (b) In accordance with requirements established
185 pursuant to rules promulgated by the board, complete at least:

186 (i) Ten (10) hours per week in the performance of
187 a work study assignment;

188 (ii) Ten (10) hours per week of paid employment;

189 (iii) Ten (10) hours per week of volunteer work;

190 or

191 (iv) A combination of work study, paid employment
192 or volunteer work equal to ten (10) hours per week; and



193 (c) Remain in good standing with the policies
194 established by the approved postsecondary educational institution
195 or other workforce training or certification program in the state
196 in which he or she is enrolled.

197 (3) Except when extended in accordance with subsection (4)
198 of this section, a student shall be eligible to receive a FAITH
199 scholarship for a maximum of one hundred forty-four (144)
200 consecutive or nonconsecutive academic credit hours earned, after
201 first admittance to any approved postsecondary educational
202 institution if satisfactory progress is achieved or maintained in
203 accordance with the provisions of subsection (2) of this section,
204 up to age twenty-six (26).

205 (4) (a) The expiration of a student's eligibility shall be
206 extended by the number of academic terms the institution
207 determines the student was unable to enroll for or complete due to
208 serving:

209 (i) On active duty status in the United States
210 Armed Forces;

211 (ii) As an officer in the Commissioned Corps of
212 the United States Public Health Service; or

213 (iii) On active service in the Peace Corps or the
214 AmeriCorps.

215 (b) The original age limitation under subsection (3) of
216 this section shall be extended by the total number of years during
217 which the student was on active duty status. The number of months



218 served on active duty status shall be rounded up to the next
219 higher year to determine the maximum length of eligibility
220 extension allowed.

221 (5) Approved postsecondary educational institutions shall
222 provide summer and holiday room and board accommodations for
223 students enrolled at such institutions on FAITH scholarships.
224 However, no such requirement shall be placed upon workforce
225 training programs, in remaining consistent with the provisions of
226 the John H. Chaffee Foster Care Program for Successful Transition
227 to Adulthood (42 USCS 677).

228 **SECTION 8.** A scholarship awarded pursuant to this chapter
229 may not be reduced by the amount of any federal aid, scholarship
230 funds, or any federal or state grant funds otherwise received by
231 the person or by the amount of any private donations made to
232 assist the Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH)
233 program.

234 **SECTION 9.** Fostering Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH)
235 scholarship funds shall be applied to tuition and mandatory fees
236 before any other grant, loan, voucher or scholarship the student
237 may be awarded to attend an approved postsecondary educational
238 institution in the state or publicly funded state workforce
239 training program.

240 **SECTION 10.** Any other provision of this chapter to the
241 contrary notwithstanding, an otherwise eligible person who earns
242 grants, scholarships or other awards, excluding loans, Pell



243 Grants, Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants or state
244 grants, sufficient to pay one hundred percent (100%) of his or her
245 tuition, room and board, and other fees at an approved
246 postsecondary educational institution in the state or publicly
247 funded state workforce training program, as governed by rules
248 promulgated by the board, may not participate in the Fostering
249 Access and Inspiring True Hope (FAITH) scholarship program.

250 **SECTION 11.** The director of the board, in conjunction with
251 the Department of Child Protection Services, may promulgate rules
252 as necessary to implement and administer this chapter.

253 **SECTION 12.** Nothing in this section shall be construed to:

254 (a) Guarantee acceptance of or entrance into any
255 approved postsecondary educational institution or publicly funded
256 workforce training or certification program for a foster or
257 adopted child;

258 (b) Limit the participation of a foster, qualified
259 residential child care or adopted student in any other program of
260 financial assistance for postsecondary education;

261 (c) Require any approved postsecondary educational
262 institution to waive costs or fees relating to room and board; or

263 (d) Restrict any approved postsecondary educational
264 institution, the Mississippi Postsecondary Student Financial
265 Assistance Board, or the Department of Child Protection Services
266 from accessing other sources of financial assistance, except
267 loans, that may be available to a foster or adopted student.



268 **SECTION 13.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
269 and after July 1, 2022.

