

By: Senator(s) Parks, Michel, DeBar,
Williams, Polk, Frazier, Butler (36th),
Hopson, Parker, Jackson (11th), Hickman

To: Universities and
Colleges; Appropriations

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2419

1 AN ACT TO CREATE THE HOSPITAL NURSES AND RESPIRATORY
2 THERAPIST RETENTION LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAM; TO PROVIDE AWARDS TO
3 CERTAIN NURSES AND RESPIRATORY THERAPIST WHO APPLY, SUBJECT TO
4 AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS; TO SET ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS; TO EXCLUDE
5 CERTAIN CATEGORIES OF PERSONS FROM ELIGIBILITY; TO REQUIRE THAT
6 RECIPIENTS MAINTAIN CURRENT EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION AT ALL TIMES
7 WITH THE STATE FINANCIAL AID BOARD; TO PROVIDE THAT AMOUNTS
8 AWARDED BE PAID TO THE RECIPIENT'S LENDER OR LOAN SERVICE
9 PROVIDER; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

11 **SECTION 1.** (1) There is established the "Hospital Nurses
12 and Respiratory Therapist Retention Loan Repayment Program" for
13 new nursing and respiratory therapist graduates to be administered
14 by the State Financial Aid Board.

15 (2) Subject to the availability of funds, an eligible
16 applicant for an initial award must have:

17 (a) Legal residency in the State of Mississippi;

18 (b) Gained employment within the last year for the
19 first time as a licensed practical nurse, licensed registered
20 nurse or respiratory therapist at a general acute care hospital in



21 the State of Mississippi that is licensed by the Mississippi State
22 Department of Health;

23 (c) A current relevant Mississippi professional
24 license; and

25 (d) Outstanding qualifying educational loans, received
26 while pursuing a nursing or relevant respiratory therapist degree,
27 which may include the principal, interest, and related expenses
28 such as the required interest premium on the unpaid balances of
29 government and commercial loans obtained by the recipient for
30 educational expense.

31 (3) Persons who have received funds from state forgivable
32 loan programs established under Mississippi law, or who are in
33 default or delinquent on any federal, state, local or commercial
34 qualifying educational loan, are not eligible for this program.

35 (4) Recipients in the initial year of the program will be
36 selected on a first-come, first-served basis from all eligible
37 applicants. In the second and subsequent years of an applicant's
38 continued eligibility, priority shall be given to renewal
39 applicants. In any given year no more than one hundred fifty
40 (150) new registered nurse applicants, fifty (50) new licensed
41 practical nurse applicants and twenty-five (25) new respiratory
42 therapist applicants may receive funds under the program.

43 (5) Recipients in the program will be selected on a
44 first-come, first-served basis from all eligible applicants. In
45 the first year and subsequent years, no more than one hundred



46 fifty (150) new registered nurse applicants, fifty (50) new
47 licensed practical nurse applicants and twenty-five (25) new
48 respiratory therapist applicants may receive funds. In addition
49 to the number of new applicants each year, the State Financial Aid
50 Board shall renew eligible applicants approved in prior years only
51 if the renewal applicant continues to meet the standards set forth
52 in this act and the renewal applicant has not received full
53 funding provided by this subsection (5).

54 (6) Awards for recipients who are employed at a licensed
55 general acute care hospital in the state may be a maximum of Three
56 Thousand Dollars (\$3,000.00) for each year of employment up to
57 three (3) years.

58 (7) A recipient shall not be penalized for ending employment
59 at a licensed general acute care hospital in the State of
60 Mississippi if the recipient begins working for another licensed
61 general acute care hospital in the State of Mississippi during the
62 year on which the award is based.

63 (8) Awards will be granted on a year-to-year basis, and
64 recipients have no obligation to seek a subsequent award.

65 (9) Awards shall be paid annually, after the expiration of
66 the year of employment for which the award was granted, to the
67 recipient's lender or loan service provider, to be applied to the
68 outstanding balance. Monies paid by the recipient or on the
69 recipient's behalf toward qualifying educational loans before



70 payment of the award are not eligible for reimbursement through
71 the program.

72 (10) During the employment year for which the award is
73 granted, a recipient must at all times keep the State Financial
74 Aid Board informed of any changes to the recipient's current,
75 correct, and complete employment information and status.

76 (11) Recipients who fail to maintain a relevant Mississippi
77 professional license or fail to fulfill the year of employment on
78 which the award was based forfeit any right to the award.

79 (12) The State Financial Aid Board, in collaboration with
80 the Licensing Board of the nurse or other health care professional
81 eligible to receive funds under this program, must track award
82 recipients under this program through their third employment year,
83 unless the recipient leaves employment at a licensed general acute
84 care hospital in the state at an earlier date. Data collected
85 must include each recipients' place of employment and any other
86 pertinent information necessary to determine the efficacy of the
87 program in retaining nurses and respiratory therapists in licensed
88 general acute care hospitals in the State of Mississippi. The
89 board must submit a report of the information collected under this
90 subsection (12) to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee by
91 October 1 of each year, and include information concerning the
92 number of submitted applications and the amount of grant funds
93 awarded to each applicant.



94 (13) The State Financial Aid Board must promulgate
95 regulations necessary for the proper administration of this
96 section, including setting a fiscal year policy for the program
97 and application dates and deadlines.

98 (14) There is established in the State Treasury a special
99 fund to be designated the "Hospital Nursing and Respiratory
100 Therapist Loan Repayment Program Fund," into which shall be
101 deposited those funds appropriated by the Legislature, and any
102 other funds that may be made available, for the purpose of
103 implementing the loan repayment program established herein. Money
104 in the fund at the end of the fiscal year shall not lapse into the
105 General Fund, and interest earned on any amounts deposited into
106 the fund shall be credited to the special fund.

107 (15) This section shall stand repealed on July 1, 2026.

108 **SECTION 2.** Section 37-106-59, Mississippi Code of 1972,
109 which establishes a forgivable loan program for baccalaureate and
110 graduate studies in nursing, is repealed from and after July 1,
111 2022.

112 **SECTION 3.** This act shall take effect and be in force from
113 and after its passage.

