MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2025

By: Representatives Roberson, Lancaster, Eubanks, Owen

To: Education

HOUSE BILL NO. 1617

AN ACT TO BE KNOWN AS THE "TIM TEBOW ACT"; TO DEFINE CERTAIN TERMS; TO AUTHORIZE STUDENTS ENROLLED IN A HOMESCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN PUBLIC SCHOOL INTERSCHOLASTIC EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; TO PRESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A STUDENT ENROLLED IN A HOMESCHOOL TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST HOMESCHOOL STUDENT SELECTION OR PARTICIPATION IN SUCH ACTIVITIES; TO PROVIDE THAT PARTICIPATION IN AN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY IS A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT; TO AUTHORIZE SCHOOL DISTRICTS TO APPLY TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO COVER THE COST OF HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; TO REQUIRE HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS TO PAY THE SAME PARTICIPATION OR ACTIVITY FEES AS PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS; TO CREATE THE HOMESCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY FUND WITHIN THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FUNDS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR HOMESCHOOL STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) This section shall be known and may be cited as the "Tim Tebow Act."

(2) As used in this section, the following words and phrases have the meanings ascribed in this subsection unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(a) "Homeschool" means a legitimate home instruction program as described under Section 37-13-91(3).

(b) "Interscholastic extracurricular activity" means any school-authorized sport or activity sanctioned by the Mississippi High School Activities Association.

(c) "Appropriate documentation" means:

(i) The results of a nationally recognized standardized test or its equivalent as determined by the State Department of Education;

(ii) A portfolio of the student's school work from the previous year demonstrating the student's proficiency appropriate for the student's grade level, as determined in the discretion of the school principal or counselor; or

(iii) If the student was enrolled in a public, private, parochial or charter school during the preceding school year, records evidencing the student's eligibility based on the student's academic success at that school.

(3) (a) A student enrolled in a homeschool is eligible to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities sponsored or engaged in by the public school to which the student would be assigned according to the attendance policies adopted by the school board of the local school district. A homeschool student who leaves a public school during the school year is subject to the transfer protocols that apply to transfers from one (1) public school to another public school. A student who is eligible under this section and selected to participate in an extracurricular activity must:

(i) Pay any participation or activity fee in an amount equal to the fee charged to public school students;

(ii) Adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibility, performance and code of conduct as other participants in the extracurricular activity;

(iii) Adhere to the same academic standards as other participants, with those standards confirmed by appropriate documentation provided by the student to the public school providing the extracurricular activity in which the student participates. A parent or other person acting in place of a parent to a homeschool student participating in the extracurricular activity periodically must provide, in accordance with the school's grading calendar, verification to the school indicating that the student is receiving a passing grade in each course or subject being taught;

(iv) Register with the school the student's intent to participate in the extracurricular activity as a representative of the school before the beginning date of the semester during which the extracurricular activity in which the student wishes to participate is offered; and

(v) Comply with the same physical examination, immunization, insurance, age and semester eligibility requirements as other students participating in the extracurricular activity.

(b) Transportation of a student being educated in a homeschool to a public school to participate in interscholastic

extracurricular activities is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or student. The student may use the same transportation as other students so long as additional expenses are not incurred by the school district.

(c) In selecting the members of an interscholastic extracurricular team, a public school shall not discriminate against a student being educated in a homeschool who is eligible to participate under this section.

(4) Participation in an interscholastic extracurricular activity is a privilege and not a right. Nothing in this act shall be interpreted to create a cause of action on behalf of a student against a public school or public school district official or against an interscholastic extracurricular activities association.

(5) With respect to a homeschool student's education program, nothing in this section shall be construed to permit an agency of the state, a public school district or any other governmental body to exercise control, regulatory authority or supervision over a homeschool student or parent or person standing in parental relation to a homeschool student beyond the control, regulatory or supervision required to participate in league activity.

(6) (a) A school district may apply to the State Department of Education for additional funding to cover the cost of any homeschool students participating in extracurricular activities.

(b) An application for funds must be made to the department on or before a date established as the deadline by the department.

(c) The application must include the number of homeschool students participating in extracurricular activities in the prior school year, the activities in which the homeschool students participated, and such other information that is required by the department.

(7) (a) There is established a special fund within the State Department of Education to be known as the "Homeschool Extracurricular Activity Fund." A school district may apply for and receive funds under this subsection in the amount of Two Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($2,250.00) for each homeschool student who participated in extracurricular activities in the prior school year. The State Department of Education shall make distributions from the Homeschool Extracurricular Activity Fund. If at any time the fund is exhausted, disbursements must be made by the department from any other available funds that may be used, in the determination of the department, for such purposes.

(b) This subsection shall not be construed to require a school district to request funding.

(c) The State Department of Education shall report disbursements made pursuant to this subsection to the Office of the State Auditor, on a form created by the Office of the State Auditor, on July 1, 2026, and every two (2) years thereafter.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2025.

ST: "Tim Tebow Act"; create to authorize homeschool students to participate in public school extracurricular activities.