MISSISSIPPI LEGISLATURE REGULAR SESSION 2025

By: Senator(s) DeBar To: Education

SENATE BILL NO. 2179

AN ACT TO ENACT THE TIM TEBOW ACT TO AUTHORIZE HOMESCHOOLED STUDENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN INTERSCHOLASTIC EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES SPONSORED BY OR ENGAGED IN BY THE PUBLIC SCHOOL TO WHICH THE STUDENT WOULD BE ASSIGNED ACCORDING TO DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD ATTENDANCE POLICIES; TO PROVIDE CERTAIN REQUIREMENTS FOR SUCH STUDENTS; TO PROVIDE THAT TRANSPORTATION OF THE STUDENT TO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SHALL BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PARENT, GUARDIAN OR STUDENT; TO PROHIBIT A PUBLIC SCHOOL FROM DISCRIMINATING AGAINST SUCH STUDENT IN THE SELECTION OF INTERSCHOLASTIC EXTRACURRICULAR TEAM MEMBERS; TO PROVIDE THAT SUCH PARTICIPATION SHALL BE CONSIDERED A PRIVILEGE AND NOT A RIGHT, AND THAT NOTHING IN THE ACT SHALL BE INTERPRETED TO CREATE A CAUSE OF ACTION; TO CREATE THE "HOMESCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITY FUND" AS A SPECIAL FUND WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION; TO PROVIDE THAT DISTRICTS MAY RECEIVE $2,250.00 PER HOMESCHOOL STUDENT WHO PARTICIPATED IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN THE PRIOR YEAR; TO REQUIRE THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO REPORT DISBURSEMENTS TO THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

SECTION 1. (1) As used in this section, unless the context requires otherwise:

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

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

(c) "Appropriate documentation," for purposes of this section, means:

(i) The results of a nationally recognized standardized test or its equivalence determined by the Mississippi Department of Education;

(ii) A portfolio of the previous year's school work demonstrating the student's proficiency appropriate for his or her grade level at the discretion of the school principal or counselor staff; or

(iii) If the student was enrolled in a public, private, parochial or charter school during the immediately preceding school year, the student's academic transcript from that school.

(2) (a) A student enrolled in a homeschool shall be eligible to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities sponsored by or engaged in by the public school to which the student would be assigned according to district school board attendance policies; provided, that homeschooled students who leave a public school during the school year are subject to the same transfer protocols that apply to public-to-public transfers. A student eligible under this section who is selected to participate in extracurricular activities shall:

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

(ii) Adhere to the same standards of behavior, responsibility, performance and code of conduct as any 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 will participate. A parent or person standing in parental relation to a homeschooled student participating in the extracurricular activity must periodically, in accordance with the school's grading calendar, provide written 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 his or her intent to participate in extracurricular activity as a representative of the school before the beginning date of the semester for the activity in which he or she wishes to participate; and

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

(b) Transportation of the student to the public school to participate in interscholastic extracurricular activities shall be the responsibility of the parent, guardian or student. The student may use the same transportation as other students as long as additional expenses are not incurred by the district.

(c) A public school shall not discriminate against a student eligible under this section in the selection of interscholastic extracurricular team members.

(3) 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.

(4) With respect to a homeschooled 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 homeschooled student or parent or person standing in parental relation to a homeschooled student beyond the control, regulatory authority or supervision required to participate in league activity.

(5) School districts may apply to the State Department of Education for additional funding to cover the cost of any homeschooled students participating in extracurricular activities.

(6) Application for funds must be made to the Department of Education on or before January 30 of each school year.

(7) The application must include the number of homeschool students participating in extracurricular activities in the prior school year, the activities in which the homeschool student

participated and such other information as required by the Department of Education.

(8) There is created in the State Treasury a special fund to be designated the "Homeschool Extracurricular Activity Fund" to be administered by the Department of Education.

(9) Districts applying for funds under this section shall receive Two Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Dollars ($2,250.00) per homeschool student that participated in extracurricular activities in the prior year. Distributions shall be made by the Department of Education from the "Homeschool Extracurricular Activity Fund." The Department of Education shall allocate funds to the Homeschool Extracurricular Activity Fund as needed to ensure the fund never exhausts.

(10) Nothing in this section shall be construed to require a school district to request funding.

(11) The Department of Education shall report disbursements made under this section to the Office of the State Auditor, on a form prescribed by the Office of the State Auditor, on July 1, 2025, and every two (2) years thereafter.

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

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