

**Adopted  
AMENDMENT NO 3 PROPOSED TO**

**Senate Bill No. 2518**

**BY: Representatives Scoggin, Bell (21st)**

1           **AMEND** after line 65 by inserting in lieu thereof the  
2 following:

3           **SECTION 5.** Sections 5 through 9 of this act shall be known  
4 and cited as the "Mississippi Connecting Career and Technical  
5 Education Employability (MissCATEE) Program," for which  
6 implementation of shall be subject to legislative appropriation.

7           **SECTION 6.** (1) The Legislature finds that establishing  
8 attainable workforce goals reflect Mississippi's commitment to  
9 creating a pipeline of skilled workers to address workforce  
10 shortages and build a sustainable economic future begins with  
11 investing in career and technical education (CTE) programs that  
12 meet the needs of employers and communities. Mississippi's  
13 workforce development goals center around equipping its citizens



14 with the skills necessary to meet the demands of high-growth,  
15 high-demand industries. These goals, include the following:

16 (a) Expanded career and technical education (CTE)  
17 opportunities, which:

18 (i) Increase access to CTE programs at community  
19 colleges to prepare students for technical and skilled trade  
20 careers;

21 (ii) Focus on industry-recognized certifications  
22 and associate degrees aligned with state workforce needs; and

23 (iii) Promote dual-enrollment opportunities for  
24 high school students to participate in CTE pathways;

25 (b) Align education and training with emphasis on  
26 Mississippi's workforce development sector strategies or priority  
27 occupations, as identified by Accelerate MS, targeting industries  
28 with workforce shortages. High-priority sectors include:

29 (i) Advanced manufacturing: addressing the  
30 growing need for skilled machinists, engineers and technicians;

31 (ii) Healthcare: expanding the pipeline for  
32 nurses, allied health professionals and paramedics;

33 (iii) Information technology: preparing workers  
34 for roles in cybersecurity, software development and IT support;

35 (iv) Transportation and logistics: training  
36 workers for commercial driving, warehousing and supply chain  
37 management; and



38 (v) Energy and construction: focusing on renewable  
39 energy technologies, traditional utilities and skilled trades like  
40 electricians and plumbers;

41 (c) Address workforce shortages in rural areas to:

42 (i) Prioritize investments in CTE programs to  
43 serve underserved rural communities where skilled labor gaps are  
44 most acute; and

45 (ii) Develop programs to retain graduates within  
46 the state, with special incentives for those who commit to working  
47 in rural areas;

48 (d) Promote lifelong learning and upskilling that:

49 (i) Encourage adults aged eighteen (18) and older  
50 to re-enter the workforce or enhance their skills through CTE  
51 programs; and

52 (ii) Provide pathways for individuals without  
53 postsecondary education to earn certifications or degrees,  
54 fostering upward economic mobility;

55 (e) Support economic resilience through public-private  
56 partnerships by:

57 (i) Collaborating with industries to identify  
58 workforce needs and design CTE curricula that address specific  
59 skill gaps; and

60 (ii) Incentivizing employers to participate in  
61 apprenticeship programs, internships and on-the-job training for  
62 students;



63 (f) Increase access to funding and support services

64 that:

65 (i) Offer financial aid programs, like  
66 tuition-free grants or scholarships, to eliminate barriers to CTE  
67 participation; and

68 (ii) Provide wraparound support services such as  
69 childcare, transportation and academic counseling to ensure  
70 student success; and

71 (g) Focus on data-driven workforce solutions that:

72 (i) Use labor market data to identify emerging  
73 industries and predict workforce needs; and

74 (ii) Regularly update sector strategies or  
75 priority occupations, as identified by Accelerate MS, and CTE  
76 offerings to reflect changes in Mississippi's economic landscape.

77 (2) Therefore, the intent of the Legislature, subject to  
78 appropriation for the purposes provided herein is:

79 (a) To provide funding to the Office of Workforce  
80 Development to establish a scholarship program for the purposes  
81 outlined herein.

82 (b) To provide tuition-free access for recent high  
83 school graduates to community colleges with accredited CTE  
84 programs that are aligned with Mississippi's workforce sector  
85 strategies or priority occupations, as identified by Accelerate  
86 MS, which result in a degree credential or industry certification



87 in an identified industry sector, ensuring a pipeline of skilled  
88 workers to meet the state's economic demands.

89 (c) To gauge the effectiveness of this program by  
90 gathering data related to the participation and employment  
91 outcomes in order to replicate successful efforts in future  
92 workforce development programs.

93 **SECTION 7.** (1) There is established the Mississippi  
94 Connecting Career and Technical Education Employability  
95 (MissCATEE) Program, which shall be directed by the Office of  
96 Workforce Development (Accelerate MS) for the purpose of providing  
97 tuition-free community college attendance for eligible recipients  
98 for career and technical education (CTE) and training for  
99 associate degree credential or industry certification in  
100 high-wage, high-demand industries with documented workforce  
101 shortages prioritized by the office. The implementation of this  
102 program shall be subject to the availability of funds appropriated  
103 by the Legislature.

104 (2) As used in this section, the following words and phrases  
105 shall have the meanings as defined herein unless the context  
106 clearly indicates otherwise:

107 (a) "Accelerate MS" or "office" means the Office of  
108 Workforce Development.

109 (b) "Eligible institution" means any community college,  
110 local workforce development area or other eligible recipient of  
111 funding under this section.



112 (c) "Eligible program" means a career and technical  
113 (CTE) program administered at an eligible institution and approved  
114 by the Office of Workforce Development (Accelerate MS), which is  
115 aligned with identified workforce sector strategies or priority  
116 occupations, and identified on the state's Eligible Training  
117 Provider List (ETPL).

118 (d) "Eligible recipient" means a person who:

119 (i) Has been a resident of Mississippi for at  
120 least one (1) year prior to enrollment in an eligible program at  
121 an eligible institution and continues to physically reside herein;

122 (ii) Is a United States citizen, lawful permanent  
123 resident, or noncitizen eligible under Title IV regulations for  
124 student aid eligibility;

125 (iii) Has a high school diploma, GED or  
126 equivalent;

127 (iv) Is enrolled full-time in an eligible CTE  
128 program at a Mississippi community college within twelve (12)  
129 months of completion of a secondary education program or  
130 dually-enrolled in an eligible CTE program through his or her high  
131 school in accordance with Section 37-15-38;

132 (v) Has completed a Free Application for Federal  
133 Student Aid (FAFSA);

134 (vi) Maintains satisfactory academic progress as  
135 defined by the administering institution upon enrollment;



136 (vii) Has not previously earned an associate or  
137 bachelor's degree. A student currently or previously enrolled in  
138 a community or junior college may be eligible if he or she changes  
139 his or her major to an identified high-demand industry sector or  
140 occupation, provided he or she has not exhausted state financial  
141 aid limitations; and

142 (viii) Agrees to remain in the State of  
143 Mississippi and work in the industry sector in which the degree  
144 credential or industry certification was earned for such a period  
145 of time as prescribed by policies promulgated by the Office of  
146 Workforce Development for each identified sector strategy or  
147 priority occupation.

148 (e) "High-wage, high-demand industry" means those  
149 industries paying above Mississippi's median annual income and  
150 prioritized by the office across the eight (8) workforce  
151 ecosystems.

152 (f) "Sector strategy" means the workforce  
153 needs of an industry within a regional labor market that has been  
154 collaboratively identified by a partnership of employers within a  
155 critical industry that brings together education, economic  
156 development, workforce systems and community organizations to  
157 collaboratively provide job-readiness training (including  
158 professional skills development), occupational skills training and  
159 support services.



160 (3) The Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid shall  
161 serve as fiscal agent in administering the funds, and shall  
162 disburse appropriate funds to eligible institutions on a semester  
163 basis upon receipt of verification of eligible recipients'  
164 enrollment in an eligible program.

165 (4) Subject to appropriation by the Legislature, allocations  
166 to eligible recipients shall be awarded to the eligible  
167 institution of enrollment by the Mississippi Office of State  
168 Financial Aid through an application process.

169 (5) The Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid shall:

170 (a) Inform each recipient of the amount his or her  
171 portion of the program funds available for use, dependent on  
172 enrollment as a full-time or part-time student; and

173 (b) Develop regulations and procedures to govern the  
174 administration of the program.

175 (6) The Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid may use a  
176 minimal amount of funds allocated for this section for the  
177 administration of the program, to be approved by the State  
178 Workforce Investment Board Executive Committee.

179 **SECTION 8.** (1) The district office of each Local Workforce  
180 Development Area shall enter into a contract agreement with each  
181 eligible recipient of funds under the program employing existing  
182 processes for certifying participants.

183 (2) The Office of Workforce Development shall establish the  
184 priorities and provide such directives along with the necessary





185 funds to the Local Workforce Development Areas, which shall  
186 administer the distribution of these funds. Of the funds  
187 appropriated under the provisions of this act, the office shall  
188 allocate no less than three percent (3%) and no more than five  
189 percent (5%) to the Local Workforce Development Areas for the  
190 administration of these provisions.

191 (3) Accelerate MS shall annually provide a list of eligible  
192 programs based on priority sectors and occupations and program  
193 recipients to the Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid. The  
194 Mississippi Office of State Financial Aid shall collaborate with  
195 Accelerate MS to track fund recipients under the program through  
196 the requisite time prescribed by the Office of Workforce  
197 Development for each identified sector strategy and priority  
198 occupation.

199 **SECTION 9.** (1) The Office of Workforce Development shall  
200 submit an annual report on the program to the Governor, the  
201 Lieutenant Governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
202 the Chair of the House Workforce Development Committee, the Chair  
203 of the Senate Economic and Workforce Development Committee and the  
204 Chairperson of the House and Senate Universities and Colleges  
205 Committees. The report shall contain a detailed explanation of  
206 how the funds appropriated for the program were awarded and how  
207 many students have participated in the grant program and their  
208 employment outcomes. The report shall also include a list of  
209 high-priority industry sectors, with corresponding Classification



210 of Instructional Programs (CIP) codes and occupations eligible for  
211 funding under the program, as determined annually by the Office of  
212 Workforce Development.

213 (2) Any high-priority industry sector or occupation  
214 identified in the report with the corresponding CIP code must  
215 remain eligible for at least four (4) academic years before being  
216 removed from the list to ensure students have adequate time to  
217 complete their credential or degree.

218 **AMEND further the title after the semicolon on line 12 by**  
219 **inserting the following:**

220 "TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION  
221 EMPLOYABILITY (MISSCATEE) PROGRAM, WHICH SHALL BE DIRECTED BY THE  
222 OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING  
223 TUITION-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE ATTENDANCE FOR ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS  
224 FOR CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION (CTE) AND TRAINING LEADING TO  
225 ASSOCIATE DEGREE CREDENTIALS OR INDUSTRY CERTIFICATIONS IN  
226 HIGH-WAGE, HIGH-DEMAND INDUSTRIES WITH DOCUMENTED WORKFORCE  
227 SHORTAGES PRIORITIZED BY THE OFFICE; TO PROVIDE FOR DEFINITIONS;  
228 TO PROVIDE THAT THE MISSISSIPPI OFFICE OF STATE FINANCIAL AID  
229 SHALL SERVE AS FISCAL AGENT IN ADMINISTERING THE FUNDS; TO  
230 PRESCRIBE THE REQUIREMENTS TO ESTABLISH ELIGIBILITY AND TO REMAIN  
231 ELIGIBLE FOR THE RECEIPT OF PROGRAM FUNDS; TO PROVIDE THAT THE  
232 RECIPIENT OF A GRANT SHALL COMMIT TO SERVING IN THE INDUSTRY  
233 SECTOR FOR WHICH HIS DEGREE CREDENTIAL OR INDUSTRY CERTIFICATION  
234 WAS GRANTED FOR SUCH A PERIOD OF TIME IN THE STATE AS DETERMINED  
235 BY THE OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; TO PROVIDE THE REPORTING  
236 REQUIREMENTS;"

