

By: Senator(s) Frazier

To: Universities and  
Colleges; Appropriations

SENATE BILL NO. 2284

1 AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-106-29, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972,  
2 TO PROVIDE THAT MISSISSIPPI STUDENTS WHO HAVE AT LEAST A 3.0 GRADE  
3 POINT AVERAGE IN HIGH SCHOOL AND MAINTAIN THAT AVERAGE SHALL BE  
4 ELIGIBLE FOR A SCHOLARSHIP EQUAL TO THE FULL COST OF TUITION AT  
5 ANY STATE INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING OR PUBLIC COMMUNITY  
6 COLLEGE, REGARDLESS OF THE IMMIGRATION STATUS OF SUCH STUDENT; AND  
7 FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

9 **SECTION 1.** Section 37-106-29, Mississippi Code of 1972, is  
10 amended as follows:

11 37-106-29. (1) There is established the Mississippi  
12 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program for college or  
13 university freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors to be  
14 administered by the Mississippi Postsecondary Education Financial  
15 Assistance Board established under Section 37-106-9, Mississippi  
16 Code of 1972, which shall set the dates and deadlines for applying  
17 for an award under this section. The board shall establish such  
18 rules and regulations as it deems necessary and proper to carry  
19 out the purposes and intent of this section.



20           (2) The college or university shall approve grants to  
21 full-time freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior Mississippi  
22 residents who meet the general requirements for student  
23 eligibility as provided in subsection (4) of this section.

24           (3) Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants shall be  
25 for Mississippi students from any Mississippi family whose prior  
26 year adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to  
27 qualify for full Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal  
28 aid. Those Mississippi students receiving less than the full Pell  
29 Grant award, as determined by the institution, shall receive a  
30 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant in an amount not to  
31 exceed the maximum Pell Grant allowable for that individual  
32 student. The award shall be applied to tuition, rooms and meals,  
33 books, materials and fees not to exceed One Thousand Dollars  
34 (\$1,000.00) for junior and senior students attending state  
35 institutions of higher learning in Mississippi or four-year  
36 regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit colleges and  
37 universities in Mississippi, and Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00)  
38 for freshmen and sophomores attending state institutions of higher  
39 learning or public community or junior colleges in Mississippi, or  
40 regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit two-year or  
41 four-year colleges in Mississippi, which will be prorated per  
42 term, semester or quarter of the academic year for costs of  
43 attendance, calculated according to the formula specified in  
44 subsection (8) of this section. Provided, however, that the award



shall be equal to the full cost of tuition at any institution of higher learning or public community college listed in subsection (4) (d) of this section for any student, regardless of immigration status, who has attained a grade point average of at least 3.0 calculated on a 4.0 scale after seven (7) semesters in high school as certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official.

(4) The general requirements for initial eligibility of students for Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants consist of the following:

(a) Member of a Mississippi family whose prior year adjusted gross income (AGI) exceeds the maximum allowed to qualify for Pell Grant eligibility and campus-based federal aid.

(b) Acceptance for enrollment at any state institution of higher learning or public community or junior college located in Mississippi, or any regionally accredited, state-approved, nonprofit four- or two-year college or university located in Mississippi as listed in subsection (d) of this Section 37-106-29(4): (i) a minimum grade point average of 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale after seven (7) semesters certified by the high school counselor or other authorized school official on the application and graduation from high school verified by the institution before disbursement of award and has scored fifteen (15) on the American College Test Program (ACT); or (ii) has attended a home education program during grade levels 9 through



70 12, and has scored fifteen (15) on the American College Testing  
71 Program; or (iii) satisfactory completion of the General  
72 Educational Development Test (GED) or have successfully completed  
73 the International Baccalaureate Program and has scored fifteen  
74 (15) on the American College Testing Program; provided, however,  
75 that any student entering a vocational or technical program of  
76 study, or who has satisfactorily completed the General Education  
77 Development Test and attends a community or junior college will  
78 not be required to have a test score under the American College  
79 Testing Program except those students enrolled in courses of  
80 academic study. Any student currently enrolled in any qualified  
81 institution shall have to only meet the same requirements as  
82 students who are applying for a renewal award.

83 (c) Resident status for purposes of receiving grants  
84 under this section shall be determined in the same manner as  
85 resident status for tuition purposes as set forth in Sections  
86 37-103-1 through 37-103-29, with the exception of Section  
87 37-103-17.

88 (d) Must attend one (1) of the following institutions  
89 of higher learning: Alcorn State University, Delta State  
90 University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State  
91 University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley  
92 State University, University of Mississippi, University of  
93 Southern Mississippi, Coahoma Community College, Copiah-Lincoln  
94 Community College, East Central Community College, East



95 Mississippi Community College, Hinds Community College, Holmes  
96 Community College, Itawamba Community College, Jones County Junior  
97 College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Delta Community  
98 College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Northeast  
99 Mississippi Community College, Northwest Mississippi Community  
100 College, Pearl River Community College, Southwest Mississippi  
101 Community College, Belhaven College, Blue Mountain College,  
102 Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Rust College, Tougaloo  
103 College, William Carey College, Mary Holmes College, Magnolia  
104 Bible College, Wood College and Wesley College.

105       (5) By accepting a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance  
106 Grant, the student is attesting to the accuracy, completeness and  
107 correctness of information provided to demonstrate the student's  
108 eligibility. Falsification of such information shall result in  
109 the denial of any pending grant and revocation of any award  
110 currently held to the extent that no further payments shall be  
111 made. Any student knowingly making false statements in order to  
112 receive a grant shall be guilty of a misdemeanor punishable, upon  
113 conviction thereof, by a fine of up to Ten Thousand Dollars  
114 (\$10,000.00), a prison sentence of up to one (1) year in the  
115 county jail, or both, and shall be required to return all  
116 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grants wrongfully  
117 obtained.

118       (6) Eligibility for renewal of Mississippi Resident Tuition  
119 Assistance Grants shall be evaluated at the end of each semester,



or term, of each academic year. As a condition for renewal, a student shall:

(a) Make steady academic progress toward a certificate or degree, as outlined in the school Satisfactory Academic Progress Standards and certified by the institution's registrar.

(b) Maintain continuous enrollment for not less than two (2) semesters or three (3) quarters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the administering agency; examples of cause may include student participation in a cooperative program, internship program or foreign study program. If a student fails to maintain continuous enrollment, and is not granted an exception for cause by the administering agency, the student is ineligible to receive the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following semester or trimester or term of the regular academic year.

(c) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.50 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester or trimester or term. Provided, however, that any student who is receiving an award equal to the full amount of the tuition at an institution of higher learning or public community college, the student shall maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of each semester or trimester or term.

(7) Each student, each year, must complete a Free Application for Federal Student Aid form or a Statement of



Certification as designed by the administering board to determine his/her eligibility for a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant.

(8) (a) The amount of the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant awarded to any one (1) student, up to the maximum amount provided in subsection (3) of this section, shall be the difference of the student's cost of attendance at his accredited college of choice and the amount of federal aid such student may receive, not to supplant but to supplement the amount of any federal aid awarded to the student. Cost of attendance is the tuition and fees of the applicable institution plus an allowance for room and meals and books and materials.

(b) Payment of the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant shall be made payable to the recipient and the educational institution and mailed directly to the institution, to be applied first to tuition.

(9) In order for an institution to remain eligible for its students to participate in the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Program, the institution shall comply with the following requirements:

(a) A complete and accurate roster of the eligibility status of each awarded student shall be made to the board for each term, semester or quarter of the academic year the student receives a Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant.



169           (b) The institution is required to make refunds to the  
170 Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant Fund for any funds  
171 which have not been disbursed to the recipient, in the case of  
172 students who have received a grant but who terminate enrollment  
173 during the academic term, semester or quarter of the academic year  
174 if an institution's refund policies permit a student to receive a  
175 refund in such instance. The recipient shall be responsible for  
176 the refund of any funds which have been disbursed by the  
177 institution in such instance.

178           (c) If a student drops below full-time status but does  
179 not terminate all enrollment during the term, semester or quarter  
180 of the academic year no refund will be required for that term.  
181 However, that student is ineligible to receive the Mississippi  
182 Resident Tuition Assistance Grant during the following term,  
183 semester or quarter of the regular academic year.

184           (d) The board may conduct its own annual audits of any  
185 institution participating in the Mississippi Resident Tuition  
186 Assistance Grant Program. The board may suspend or revoke an  
187 institution's eligibility to receive future monies under the  
188 program if it finds that the institution has not complied with the  
189 provisions of this section. In determining a student's initial  
190 eligibility, the number of prior semesters enrolled will not be  
191 counted against the student.

192           (10) No student may receive a Mississippi Resident Tuition  
193 Assistance Grant for more than the equivalent semesters or





quarters required to complete one (1) baccalaureate degree or one (1) certificate or associate degree program per institution.

(11) Subject to the availability of funds specifically appropriated therefor, it is the intent of the Legislature to fully fund grant awards to eligible students. If funds are insufficient to fully fund grant awards to eligible students, grant awards shall be prorated among all eligible students. No student shall receive any combination of student financial aid in excess of the cost of attendance as defined in subsection (8)(a).

(12) No student receiving a Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant as provided in Section 37-106-31 shall be eligible to receive the Mississippi Resident Tuition Assistance Grant pursuant to Section 37-106-29 unless he is eligible for such award after the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant has been considered by the board when conducting an assessment of the financial resources available to the student. In no case shall any student receive any combination of student financial aid that would exceed the cost of attendance, as defined in subsection (8)(a).

For purposes of this section, certificated shall mean, but not be limited to, all postsecondary vocational programs in eligible institutions as identified in subsection (4)(d) of this section.

**SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 2013.

