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Chapter No. 467  
13/HR40/R676SG  
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***HOUSE BILL NO. 425***

Originated in House  Clerk

HOUSE BILL NO. 425

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 37-157-1, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE HIGH SCHOOL COURSE WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR THE STUDENT TUITION ASSISTANCE GRANTS FOR STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 37-157-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is amended as follows:

37-157-1. (1) The tuition at any institution of higher education in the state shall be paid by the state on behalf of any student who enrolls in such a school to pursue an academic undergraduate degree, who applies for the payment thereof, and who meets all of the following qualifications:

(a) Actual residence in Mississippi during the twenty-four (24) months immediately preceding university enrollment. For the purposes of this paragraph, residency shall be demonstrated by proof of the following as required by the administering agency:

(i) If registered to vote, being registered in Mississippi.

(ii) If licensed to drive a motor vehicle, being in possession of a Mississippi driver's license.

(iii) If owning a motor vehicle located within Mississippi, being in possession of Mississippi registration for that vehicle.

(iv) If earning an income, having filed a Mississippi state income tax return and having complied with state income tax laws and regulations.

(b) Having a parent or guardian who is a domiciliary of Mississippi.

(c) Graduation from high school within the two (2) years preceding the application with a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale.

(d) Successful completion of seventeen and one-half (17-1/2) units of high school course work \* \* \* that includes the College Preparatory Curriculum approved by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning and required for admission into a state university, plus one (1) unit of art (may include one (1) unit or two (2) one-half (1/2) units) from the approved Mississippi Department of Education Arts-Visual and Performing series, and one (1) additional advanced elective unit, which may include Foreign Language II.

\* \* \*

(e) Having a composite score on the American College Test of at least twenty (20) on the 1989 version or an equivalent concordant value on an enhanced version of such test.

(f) Having no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations.

(g) Being in financial need.

(2) For purposes of this section:

(a) "Institution of higher education" shall mean any of the following institutions of higher learning or community or junior colleges located in Mississippi: Alcorn State University, Delta State University, Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi Valley State University, University of Mississippi, University of Southern Mississippi, Coahoma Community College, Copiah-Lincoln Community College, East Central Community College, East Mississippi Community College, Hinds Community College, Holmes Community College, Itawamba Community College, Jones County Junior College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Delta Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, Northeast Mississippi Community College, Northwest Mississippi Community College, Pearl River Community College, Southwest Mississippi Community College, Belhaven College, Blue Mountain College, Millsaps College, Mississippi College, Rust College, Tougaloo College, William Carey College, Mary Holmes College, Magnolia Bible College and Wood College.

(b) "Tuition" shall mean the semester or trimester or term charges and all required fees imposed by an institution of higher education as a condition of enrollment by all students. However, for a two-year nonpublic institution of higher education defined in paragraph (a), the tuition payments shall not exceed the average charges and fees required by all of the two-year public institutions of higher education defined in paragraph (a), and for a four-year nonpublic institution of higher education defined in paragraph (a), the tuition payments shall not exceed the average charges and fees required by all of the four-year public institutions of higher education defined in paragraph (a).

(3) The tuition at any institution of higher education in the state shall be paid by the state on behalf of any student who enrolls in such a school to pursue an academic undergraduate or associate degree, who applies for the payment thereof, and who meets the qualifications enumerated in paragraphs (a), (b), (f) and (g) of subsection (1) but who fails to meet one (1) of the particular requirements established by paragraph (c), (d) or (e) of subsection (1) by an amount of ten percent (10%) or less.

(4) To maintain continued state payment of tuition, once enrolled in an institution of higher education, a student shall meet all of the following requirements:

(a) Make steady academic progress toward a degree, earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit

required for full-time standing in each academic period requiring such enrollment;

(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;

(c) Have a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 calculated on a 4.0 scale at the end of the first academic year and thereafter maintain such a cumulative grade point average as evaluated at the end of each academic year;

(d) Have no criminal record, except for misdemeanor traffic violations; and

(e) Be found to be in financial need.

(5) The provisions of this chapter shall be administered by the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in conjunction with the \* \* \* Mississippi Community College Board. The board may provide by rule for all matters necessary for the implementation of this chapter.

(6) By rule, the board shall provide for:

(a) A mechanism for informing all students of the availability of the assistance provided pursuant to this chapter early enough in their schooling that a salutary motivational effect is possible.

(b) Applications, forms, financial audit procedures, eligibility and other program audit procedures and other matters related to efficient operation.

(c) A procedure for waiver through the 1996-1997 academic year of the program eligibility requirement for successful completion of a specified core curriculum upon proper documentation by the applicant that failure to comply with such requirement is due solely to the fact that the required course or courses were not available to the applicant at the school attended.

(7) An applicant shall be found to be in financial need if:

(a) The family has one (1) child under the age of twenty-one (21), and the two-year average annual adjusted gross income of the family is less than Thirty-six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$36,500.00); or

(b) The family has a two-year average annual adjusted gross income of less than Thirty-six Thousand Five Hundred Dollars (\$36,500.00) plus Five Thousand Dollars (\$5,000.00) for each additional child under the age of twenty-one (21).

The two-year average annual adjusted gross income of the family shall be verified by Internal Revenue Service returns or by certified affidavits in cases of income that cannot be verified by such returns.

As used in this subsection, the term "family" for an unemancipated applicant means the applicant, the applicant's

parents, and other children under age twenty-one (21) of the applicant's parents. The term "family" for an emancipated applicant means the applicant, an applicant's spouse, and any children under age twenty-one (21) of the applicant and spouse.

(8) An appropriation of funds may annually be made to the board sufficient to cover, in addition to any other available funds, the costs of tuition required to be paid, both initial and continuing, for the coming academic year. All such payments shall be made directly to the institution to which such tuition is due after notice to the school that the state shall pay the tuition of a student and after notice from the school that the student has actually enrolled.

(9) The board may seek, accept and expend funds from any source, including private business, industry, foundations and other groups as well as any federal or other governmental funding available for this purpose.

(10) No student shall receive a grant pursuant to this chapter in an amount greater than the tuition charged by the school. The student must apply for a federal grant prior to receiving state funds.

**SECTION 2.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
and after its passage.

PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
February 7, 2013

  
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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PASSED BY THE SENATE  
March 13, 2013

  
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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR

  
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GOVERNOR

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