

HB288 INTRODUCED



1 HB288
2 F9RTDCD-1
3 By Representatives Mooney, Gray, Tillman, Woods
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 13-Feb-25



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28

SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education provides loan assistance to certain math and science public school teachers through the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP).

This bill would authorize the commission to award loan assistance to eligible licensed athletic trainers through the program.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to Alabama Commission on Higher Education; to add Article 5 to Chapter 5 of Title 16, Code of Alabama 1975, to authorize the commission to award loan assistance to eligible athletic trainers through the Alabama Math and Science Teacher Education Program (AMSTEP).

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

Section 1. Article 5 is added to Chapter 5 of Title 16 of the Code of Alabama 1975 to read as follows:

§16-5-100

For the purposes of this article, the following terms



HB288 INTRODUCED

29 have the following meanings:

30 (1) APPROVED DEGREE. A completed master's degree
31 recognized by the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic
32 Training Education for an athletic training program through
33 which students become eligible for an approved degree.

34 (2) APPROVED INSTITUTION. A public or private nonprofit
35 institution of higher education that satisfies both of the
36 following:

37 a. Is accredited by the Southern Association of
38 Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges or by a nationally
39 recognized accrediting agency that provides the institution
40 with eligibility to receive Title IV federal student aid.

41 b. Is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of
42 Athletic Training Education for an athletic training program
43 through which students become eligible for national
44 certification upon successfully completing the Board of
45 Certification, Inc. examination.

46 (3) ATHLETIC TRAINING SERVICES. Services provided by a
47 licensed athletic trainer within the scope of athletic
48 training practice pursuant to Chapter 40 of Title 34.

49 (4) CERTIFICATION. National recognition by successfully
50 completing the Board of Certification, Inc. examination for
51 athletic training.

52 (5) CHARTER SCHOOL. A public K-12 school established
53 pursuant to Chapter 6F.

54 (6) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher
55 Education.

56 (7) ELIGIBLE APPLICANT. An individual who satisfies the



HB288 INTRODUCED

57 criteria set out in this article and is eligible under rules
58 adopted by the commission in consultation with the Alabama
59 Board of Athletic Trainers.

60 (8) LICENSED ATHLETIC TRAINER. A healthcare
61 professional who is legally authorized to perform athletic
62 training services within this state upon satisfying all of the
63 following requirements:

64 a. Graduated from an approved athletic training program
65 at the master's degree level from an approved institution.

66 b. Passed the Board of Certification, Inc. examination.

67 c. Holds a valid license from the Alabama Board of
68 Athletic Trainers that verifies the individual meets
69 state-specific requirements, including continuing education.

70 (9) LOAN ASSISTANCE SUPPORT. Financial assistance
71 provided to a licensed athletic trainer who provides athletic
72 training services at a qualifying institution and has an
73 outstanding federal student loan balance.

74 (10) PROGRAM. The Alabama Math and Science Teacher
75 Education Program (AMSTEP), or any successor program,
76 administered by the commission in consultation with the
77 Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers.

78 (11) QUALIFYING INSTITUTION. A public or private K-12
79 school or school system or two-year or four-year institution
80 of higher education in this state that requires athletic
81 training services for sanctioned activities governed by an
82 organization, including the Alabama High School Athletic
83 Association, the Alabama Independent School Association, the
84 Alabama Community College Conference, the National Collegiate



HB288 INTRODUCED

85 Athletic Association, the National Association of
86 Intercollegiate Athletics, or the National Intercollegiate
87 Rodeo Association.

88 (12) YEAR. The fall, spring, and summer semesters of an
89 academic year of a qualifying institution.

90 §16-5-101

91 (a) This article shall be administered by the
92 commission in consultation with the Alabama Board of Athletic
93 Trainers.

94 (b) A percentage of the funds appropriated to the
95 program may be expended for the operation and administrative
96 requirements provided in this article.

97 (c) The requirements of this article are contingent
98 upon available funding for the program.

99 (d) The commission, in consultation with the Alabama
100 Board of Athletic Trainers, may adopt rules for the
101 administration and implementation of this article.

102 §16-5-102

103 (a) The commission may award loan assistance from the
104 program to eligible applicants.

105 (b) To be eligible for loan assistance of seven
106 thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500) per year worked or
107 three thousand seven hundred fifty dollars (\$3,750) per
108 semester worked, for a maximum of four consecutive years, an
109 applicant shall satisfy all of the following:

110 (1) Is a citizen or a lawful permanent resident of the
111 United States.

112 (2) Holds an approved degree from an approved



HB288 INTRODUCED

113 institution.

114 (3) Is licensed and in good standing with the Alabama
115 Board of Athletic Trainers pursuant to Chapter 40 of Title 34.

116 (4) Provides an average of at least 20 hours of
117 athletic training services per week at qualifying institutions
118 throughout the year in this state.

119 (5) Has outstanding subsidized or unsubsidized federal
120 student loans.

121 (6) Satisfies additional continuing eligibility
122 criteria established by the commission in consultation with
123 the Alabama Board of Athletic Trainers.

124 (c) Loan assistance awards shall be distributed
125 directly to eligible applicants in two disbursements during
126 the applicable year with one disbursement being made after
127 January 1 and the second disbursement being made after June 1.

128 (d) To receive loan assistance, an eligible applicant
129 shall register online with the Comptroller and verify his or
130 her employment. An eligible applicant who receives loan
131 assistance and remains employed shall continue to receive
132 assistance for the four-year limit.

133 (e) An eligible applicant shall notify the commission
134 in writing of any change in status within 30 days after the
135 change. Failure to notify the commission of a change in status
136 shall affect future eligibility. A change in status includes
137 all of the following:

138 (1) A change in name.

139 (2) A change in residence.

140 (3) A change in employment status.



HB288 INTRODUCED

141 (f) The commission shall inform an eligible applicant
142 awarded loan assistance that loan assistance is considered
143 income by the Internal Revenue Service.

144 (g) The commission shall determine the necessary
145 procedures for awarding loan assistance if an eligible
146 applicants' total awards exceed available funding.

147 §16-5-103

148 Any individual or institution not satisfied with the
149 commission's actions in administering the program may submit a
150 written petition to the commission within 30 days after notice
151 of the action complained of. If the individual or institution
152 is not satisfied with the commission's response, the
153 individual or institution may request a rehearing within 20
154 days after the commission's response. The commission shall
155 schedule the rehearing within 20 days after receiving the
156 rehearing request. The individual or institution may present
157 written and oral evidence supporting the petition and may be
158 represented by counsel. The decision of the commission
159 following the rehearing is final.

160 Section 2. This act shall become effective on August 1,
161 2025.