

By: Senator(s) DeBar

To: Education;
Appropriations

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 2715

1 AN ACT TO REQUIRE THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS
2 OF HIGHER LEARNING TO DEVELOP A PLAN AND ADMINISTER THE PROCESS OF
3 TRANSFERRING OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF THE MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY
4 FOR WOMEN TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY; TO REQUIRE THE
5 RESULTING INSTITUTION TO BE NAMED THE W AT MISSISSIPPI STATE
6 UNIVERSITY; TO SET THE LEGISLATIVE INTENT OF THE ACT; TO REQUIRE
7 THE INSTITUTION TO REMAIN IN COLUMBUS, MISSISSIPPI; TO REQUIRE THE
8 BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING TO
9 FACILITATE SUCH TRANSFER; TO PROVIDE THAT THE BOARD AND THE
10 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SHALL TRANSFER THE OPERATION OF THE
11 MISSISSIPPI SCHOOL FOR MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TO THE W AT
12 MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY; TO AMEND SECTIONS 37-117-1,
13 37-139-3, 37-101-1 AND 25-65-7, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO
14 CONFORM TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT; TO REPEAL SECTIONS 37-117-3,
15 37-117-5, 37-117-7, 37-117-9 AND 37-117-11, WHICH PROVIDE FOR
16 VARIOUS PROVISIONS RELATED TO THE MISSISSIPPI UNIVERSITY FOR
17 WOMEN; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

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

19 **SECTION 1. Legislative intent.** The Legislature finds that:

20 (a) The Industrial Institute and College was
21 established in Columbus, Mississippi, in 1884, as the first
22 state-supported college for women in America, later evolving into
23 the "Mississippi University for Women in 1974, and admitting men
24 in 1982;



25 (b) The Mississippi University for Women has always
26 provided a phenomenal higher education to students with a distinct
27 emphasis on professional development and leadership opportunities
28 for all, particularly women;

29 (c) The Mississippi University for Women is
30 consistently ranked as one of the best value schools among
31 southern public universities, with low student debt and high
32 degree completion rates;

33 (d) The Mississippi University for Women remains
34 integral to the city of Columbus and continues to receive strong
35 support from business, community and governmental leaders in the
36 area;

37 (e) The modern landscape of higher education is
38 continually changing, especially with concerns about enrollment
39 nationwide in future years, and the needs, duties and
40 responsibilities of institutions of higher learning must adapt to
41 this changing landscape;

42 (f) Facing declining enrollment and other challenges,
43 the Mississippi University for Women, along with its students, the
44 state, region and local community, would be better served by close
45 collaboration with Mississippi State University, a research
46 institution less than 25 miles away from the Mississippi
47 University for Women Campus;

48 (g) As a regional university connected to Mississippi
49 State University, the students of the Mississippi University for



50 Women would have access to more undergraduate and graduate degree
51 courses and degree paths, student-life options and research
52 programs, among other resources and opportunities;

53 (h) A collaboration between Mississippi State
54 University and the Mississippi University for Women may also
55 result in efficiencies and innovations which can help both
56 institutions flourish in the future;

57 (i) Beginning July 1, 2025, the Mississippi University
58 for Women shall transfer all assets and real property, together
59 with buildings and other improvements erected thereon, to the
60 control and ownership of Mississippi State University;

61 (j) The Mississippi University for Women shall
62 hereafter be known as "The W at Mississippi State University"; and

63 (k) The intent of the transfer provided for in this act
64 is to honor the important legacy of the Mississippi University for
65 Women and to ensure The W at Mississippi State University shall
66 become a successful regional university, remain located in the
67 city of Columbus, and that both the campus at Mississippi State
68 University in Starkville and The W at Mississippi State University
69 in Columbus benefit from their mutual connection.

70 **SECTION 2.** (1) Beginning July 1, 2024, the Board of
71 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning shall develop a
72 plan to administer the process of transferring ownership and
73 control of the Mississippi University for Women to the Mississippi
74 State University. The plan provided for in this subsection shall



75 also include a plan to ensure the continued success of the
76 Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, currently located
77 on the campus of the Mississippi University for Women. The Board
78 of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning, in concert
79 with the Department of Education when applicable for purposes of
80 the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, shall provide
81 all oversight, staffing needs and any other resource to ensure
82 such transfer may be completed by July 1, 2025.

83 (2) The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher
84 Learning shall ensure that all student records, enrollment
85 records, scholarship programs, tuition assessments, endowments and
86 other funds are properly transferred from the Mississippi
87 University for Women to the Mississippi State University for the
88 administration of The W at Mississippi State University.

89 (3) Beginning July 1, 2025, The W at Mississippi State
90 University shall begin operations with oversight and
91 administration provided by the Mississippi State University.
92 The W at Mississippi State University shall continue operations in
93 Columbus, Mississippi.

94 **SECTION 3.** Section 37-117-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
95 amended as follows:

96 37-117-1. The institution incorporated by the act of the
97 legislature, approved March 12, 1884, and established in pursuance
98 thereof, known as the "Mississippi University for Women" shall
99 continue to exist as a body politic and corporate by the name of



100 the " * * * The W at Mississippi State University" with all its
101 property and franchises, rights, powers and privileges conferred
102 on it by law, or properly incident to such a body and necessary to
103 accomplish the purpose of its creation transferred to the
104 Mississippi State University; * * * the Mississippi State
105 University may receive and hold all real estate and personal
106 property conveyed or given to it for such purposes. * * *
107 Whenever the name "Mississippi * * * University for Women" appears
108 the same is construed to denote " * * * The W at Mississippi State
109 University."

110 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-139-3, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
111 amended as follows:

112 37-139-3. (1) There is hereby created the Mississippi
113 School for Mathematics and Science which shall be a residential
114 school for eleventh and twelfth grade high school students located
115 on the campus of * * * The W at Mississippi State University.

116 (2) The school shall be governed by the State Board of
117 Education.

118 (3) The board shall develop a plan relating to the opening,
119 the operation and the funding of the school. Such plan shall be
120 presented to the Legislature during the * * * 2025 Regular Session
121 and shall include an equitable and reasonable plan for student
122 recruitment without regard to race, creed or color.



123 (4) The purpose of the school shall be to educate the gifted
124 and talented students of the state, and its curriculum and
125 admissions policies shall reflect such purpose.

126 (5) The board shall prepare the annual budget for the
127 school.

128 **SECTION 5.** Section 37-101-1, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
129 amended as follows:

130 37-101-1. The following state institutions of higher
131 learning shall be under the management and control of a board of
132 trustees to be known as the Board of Trustees of State
133 Institutions of Higher Learning, namely:

134 (a) The University of Mississippi;

135 (b) Mississippi State University of Agriculture and
136 Applied Science, which shall include The W at Mississippi State
137 University;

138 (c) * * * The University of Southern Mississippi;

139 (* * *d) Delta State University;

140 (* * *e) Alcorn State University;

141 (* * *f) Jackson State University;

142 (* * *g) Mississippi Valley State University;

143 (* * *h) And any other of like kind which may be
144 hereafter established by the state.

145 **SECTION 6.** Section 25-65-7, Mississippi Code of 1972, is
146 amended as follows:



147 25-65-7. The provisions of this chapter shall only apply (a)
148 to the following universities: (i) Alcorn State University, (ii)
149 Delta State University, (iii) Jackson State University, (iv)
150 Mississippi State University, (v) Mississippi State University
151 Agriculture and Forestry Experiment Station, (vi) Mississippi
152 State University Cooperative Extension Service, (vii) Mississippi
153 State University Forest and Wildlife Research Center, (viii)
154 Mississippi State University State Chemical Laboratory, (ix) * * *
155 The W at Mississippi State University, (x) Mississippi Valley
156 State University, (xi) The University of Mississippi, (xii)
157 University of Mississippi Medical Center and * * * (xiii) The
158 University of Southern Mississippi; (b) to the following
159 community/junior colleges: (i) Coahoma Community College, (ii)
160 Copiah-Lincoln Community College, (iii) East Central Community
161 College, (iv) East Mississippi Community College, (v) Hinds
162 Community College, (vi) Holmes Community College, (vii) Itawamba
163 Community College, (viii) Jones County Junior College, (ix)
164 Meridian Community College, (x) Mississippi Delta Community
165 College, (xi) Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, (xii)
166 Northeast Mississippi Community College, (xiii) Northwest
167 Mississippi Community College, (xiv) Pearl River Community College
168 and (xv) Southwest Mississippi Community College; and (c) to the
169 following agencies: (i) the Department of Finance and
170 Administration, (ii) the State Tax Commission, (iii) the
171 Department of Education, (iv) the State Department of Health, (v)



172 the Department of Mental Health, (vi) the Department of
173 Agriculture and Commerce, (vii) the Mississippi Development
174 Authority, (viii) the Department of Environmental Quality, (ix)
175 the Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, (x) the
176 Department of Corrections, (xi) the Division of Medicaid, (xii)
177 the Department of Rehabilitation Services, (xiii) the Department
178 of Public Safety, (xiv) the Mississippi Employment Security
179 Commission, (xv) the Mississippi Department of Information
180 Technology Services, (xvi) the Public Employees Retirement System,
181 (xvii) the Mississippi Department of Transportation, (xviii) the
182 Mississippi Gaming Commission and (xix) the Mississippi Department
183 of Human Services.

184 **SECTION 7.** Sections 37-117-3, 37-117-5, 37-117-7, 37-117-9
185 and 37-117-11, which provide for various provisions related to the
186 Mississippi University for Women, are hereby repealed.

187 **SECTION 8.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act shall take effect
188 and be in force from and after July 1, 2024. Sections 3 through 7
189 of this act shall take effect and be in force from and after July
190 1, 2025.

