

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to the law as it existed prior to this session of the General Assembly.

1 State of Arkansas
2 83rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2001

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 2370

4
5 By: Representative Broadway
6 By: Senator Mahony

For An Act To Be Entitled

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9
10 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS WORKFORCE IMPROVEMENT
11 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR
12 OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

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14
15 AN ACT TO CREATE THE ARKANSAS WORKFORCE
16 IMPROVEMENT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.

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19 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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21 SECTION 1. (a) The General Assembly recognizes the importance that
22 Arkansans of all ages continue to pursue educational opportunities.

23 (b) Arkansans who desire to pursue educational enrichment and to
24 improve present skills, but who may be unable to attend post-secondary
25 education institutions in the traditional manner are commended for their
26 initiative and persistence.

27 (c) It is the intent of this legislation to provide financial support
28 to adult students who are unlikely to receive meaningful financial aid from
29 traditional state or federal financial aid programs, and to enhance the
30 education of the current workforce in Arkansas.

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32 SECTION 2. Definitions. For purposes of this act:

33 (1) "Approved institution" means any state-supported post-secondary
34 educational institution located in Arkansas that:

35 (A) Awards baccalaureate degrees, associate degrees, or credit
36 certificates;

1 (B) Is approved to award federal financial aid; and

2 (C) Is accredited by the North Central Association Commission on
3 Institutions of Higher Education;

4 (2) "Credit certificate" means certificate programs which are taken
5 for credit;

6 (3) "Eligible student" means any student who meets the criteria set
7 out in this act, and who is deemed to be eligible by rules and regulations
8 authorized by this act and promulgated by the Department of Higher Education;

9 (4) "Program" means Arkansas Workforce Improvement Scholarship
10 Program; and

11 (5) "Tuition" means charges levied for attendance at an approved
12 institution, including mandatory fees.

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14 SECTION 3. To encourage non-traditional students to enroll in post-
15 secondary educational institutions there is established the Arkansas
16 Workforce Improvement Scholarship Program.

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18 SECTION 4. (a) A person may be awarded a scholarship from the program
19 if the person meets all of the following criteria:

20 (1) The person is twenty-five (25) years of age or older on or
21 before the first day of the semester or summer session in which the person is
22 enrolling;

23 (2) The person is a resident of the State of Arkansas;

24 (3) The person is a citizen of the United States or is a
25 permanent, legal resident alien;

26 (4) The person is accepted for admission at an approved
27 institution to pursue a baccalaureate degree, an associate degree, or a
28 credit certificate;

29 (5) The person graduated from high school or passed the General
30 Educational Development Test, or meets the ability to benefit criteria as
31 defined by federal regulations in existence on January 1, 2001;

32 (6) The person does not have a baccalaureate degree from an
33 institution of higher education; and

34 (7) The person is not eligible for federal or state need-based
35 financial aid, excluding Stafford Loans.

36 (b) Final eligibility for this program shall be determined only after

1 the person has completed the institution's financial aid process.

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3 SECTION 5. (a) Each person awarded a scholarship shall receive the
4 scholarship for one (1) academic year or its equivalent for part-time
5 students, as defined by the Department of Higher Education.

6 (b) The scholarship may be renewable for up to three (3) academic
7 years, or the equivalent for part-time students, if the person applies and
8 meets continuing eligibility criteria established by the Department of Higher
9 Education.

10 (c)(1) The amount of the annual scholarship for full-time students
11 shall not exceed one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per academic year.

12 (2) The amount of the annual scholarship for part-time students
13 shall be prorated on the basis of the number of credit hours enrolled each
14 term, such that the recipient may receive up to the maximum equivalent of two
15 hundred fifty dollars (\$250) per three (3) credit hours each term, not to
16 exceed a maximum of one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per academic year.

17 (3) The maximum total scholarship award shall be four thousand
18 dollars (\$4,000).

19 (d) The enrollment hours shall be determined on the eleventh class day
20 or the official Department of Higher Education counting day.

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22 SECTION 6. (a) There is created the Arkansas Workforce Improvement
23 Scholarship Advisory Committee.

24 (b) The committee shall consist of the seven (7) members to be
25 appointed by the Executive Council of the Presidents Council, created under
26 Arkansas Code 6-61-204, as follows:

27 (1) There shall be three (3) members who are directors of
28 institutional financial aid at two-year educational institutions;

29 (2) There shall be three (3) members who are directors of
30 institutional financial aid departments at four-year educational
31 institutions; and

32 (3) The President of the Arkansas Association of Student
33 Financial Aid Administrators.

34 (c) The committee members shall initially be appointed for staggered
35 terms so that the terms of one (1) member from a two-year institution and one
36 (1) member of a four-year institution expires each year for a period of five

1 (5) years; thereafter each member shall be appointed to serve a term of five
2 (5) years.

3 (d) Vacancies on the board shall be filled by appointment of the
4 Executive Council of the Presidents Council to serve out the remainder of the
5 term of the vacated position.

6 (e) Members of the committee shall not be entitled to compensation for
7 their services and shall not receive expense reimbursement, except from the
8 institution employing the member.

9 (f) The Department of Higher Education shall provide necessary staff
10 to assist the committee with the range and diversity of its charge.

11 (g) The committee shall hold its first meeting within thirty (30) days
12 after its appointment to organize as necessary to carry out its purposes as
13 prescribed by this act. The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
14 designate a person on the committee to call and preside at the first meeting.

15 (h) A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the
16 transaction of business.

17 (i) The committee shall select by majority vote one (1) of its members
18 to serve as chairperson and one (1) to serve as vice chairperson.

19 (j) The committee shall meet as necessary to carry out the duties of
20 the committee. Meetings may be called by the chair or as provided by the
21 rules of the committee.

22 (k) The committee shall provide advice to the Department of Higher
23 Education and the Presidents Council concerning the development of rules and
24 regulations for the operation and administration of the program.

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26 SECTION 7. (a)(1) The Department of Higher Education shall promulgate
27 rules and regulations for the administration of the program by the
28 institutions of higher education consistent with the purposes and
29 requirements of this act.

30 (2) The rules and regulations shall be reviewed by the Executive
31 Council, and approved by the Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

32 (b) The rules and regulations shall include a deadline in October and
33 March of each year for application to the program, student eligibility
34 criteria based on the provisions of this act, the method for selecting
35 scholarship recipients, rules for determining continuing eligibility,
36 procedures for making payment to recipients, satisfactory academic standards,

1 and other administrative procedures which may be necessary for the
2 implementation and operation of the program.

3 (c) The Department of Higher Education shall file a report each year
4 with the Legislative Council which states the total yearly number of
5 applicants to the program, and the total yearly number of scholarships
6 awarded.

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8 SECTION 8. (a) Scholarships shall be awarded contingent on the
9 appropriation and availability of funds for the program.

10 (b)(1) The total funds available for the program shall be divided
11 among all approved institutions.

12 (2) The funds shall be divided pro rata based on each approved
13 institution's percentage of enrollment of undergraduate students over the age
14 of twenty-five (25) earning credit for the previous academic year.

15 (3) Each institution shall be responsible for administering the
16 rules and regulations as approved by the Arkansas Higher Education
17 Coordinating Board.

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19 SECTION 9. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
20 General Assembly that non-traditional students are often ineligible to
21 receive meaningful financial assistance to post-secondary educational
22 institutions, and that the financial assistance for non-traditional students
23 is critically needed prior to the beginning of the 2001-2002 academic year.
24 Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist and this act being immediately
25 necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety shall
26 become effective on the date of its approval by the Governor. If the bill is
27 neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, it shall become effective on the
28 expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill.
29 If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, it shall
30 become effective on the date the last house overrides the veto.

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