

HB98 INTRODUCED



1 HB98
2 L5FEJAA-1
3 By Representative Treadaway
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 13-Jan-26
6 PFD: 06-Jan-26



4 SYNOPSIS:

5 Existing law provides that in certain
6 circumstances a child or a spouse of a law enforcement
7 officer who is killed or totally disabled in the line
8 of duty may receive financial assistance to pay college
9 tuition.

10 This bill would establish a program to pay
11 tuition and associated expenses on behalf of children
12 and spouses of long-term city, county, and state law
13 enforcement officers. This bill would provide that the
14 scholarship money may be used for an undergraduate
15 course of study offered by a public or private
16 technical school, college, or university in the State
17 of Alabama.

18 This bill would further provide for the
19 administration of this scholarship by the Alabama
20 Commission on Higher Education; require annual
21 reporting on the program to the Legislature; and
22 establish the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
23 Scholarship Fund.

24 This bill would also authorize creation by the
25 Department of Revenue of a blackout license plate,
26 proceeds for which would be used to fund the
27 scholarship.
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HB98 INTRODUCED

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A BILL

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TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT

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34 Relating to scholarships; to establish a program to
35 grant tuition money to dependents of law enforcement officers
36 for use in participating public or private institutions of
37 higher education in the State of Alabama; to provide
38 requirements for scholarship eligibility; to provide
39 scholarship conditions and terms; to provide for
40 administration of the program by the Alabama Commission on
41 Higher Education; to establish the Alabama Law Enforcement
42 Officers Family Scholarship Fund; and to establish a
43 distinctive blackout license plate to help fund the
44 scholarship program.

45 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

46 Section 1. Article 11, commencing with Section
47 36-21-220, is added to Chapter 21 of Title 36, Code of Alabama
48 1975, to read as follows:

49 Article 11.

50 §36-21-220

51 This article shall be known and cited as the Alabama
52 Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Program.

53 §36-21-221

54 As used in this article, the following terms have the
55 following meanings:

56 (1) ACADEMIC PERIOD. A semester or quarter.



HB98 INTRODUCED

(2) APPROVED POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM. Any for-credit or non-credit workforce or career training program or course of study at the undergraduate level directed toward a vocational certification, an associate degree, or a baccalaureate degree offered by a participating institution. The term includes an academic major.

(3) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education, including the commission's Office of Student Assistance.

(4) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT. An individual who, on the date of applying for the scholarship provided under this article, is:

a. Not eligible for the police officer's survivors educational assistance provided under Article 5 of this chapter; and

b. Either of the following:

1. A natural or adopted child of a qualifying law enforcement officer, who is under 27 years of age, and who has resided in the state for at least the two preceding years; or

2. The current or surviving spouse of a qualifying law enforcement officer who has resided in the state for at least the two preceding years.

(5) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. Any law enforcement department or agency that serves the state, a municipality, a county, or a postsecondary educational institution.

(6) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION. An accredited public or private postsecondary vocational school, technical school, community or junior college, college, or university that



HB98 INTRODUCED

enters into a contract with the board to accept reimbursement for a scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.

(7) QUALIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. An individual who:

a. Is or has been certified by the Alabama Peace Officers' Standards and Training Commission.

b. Is employed full-time for at least seven years by a single law enforcement agency in the state, or at least 12 continuous years on a full-time basis by more than one law enforcement agency in the state.

c. If no longer employed in law enforcement or retired, was not terminated from the most recent employment as a law enforcement officer pursuant to a disciplinary action.

(8) REQUIRED EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES. Costs charged for tuition, mandatory fees, and books or electronic and digital media required on a course syllabus.

§36-21-222

(a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship is established to reimburse participating institutions on behalf of eligible dependents the cost of required educational expenses for up to eight semesters or 16 quarters in an approved postsecondary program.

(b) (1) The scholarship shall pay required educational expenses after any other amounts from public or private scholarships, grants, aid, or gifts awarded by third parties to the eligible dependent for the academic period have been applied.

(2) The amount for each recipient shall be capped at



HB98 INTRODUCED

three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for each academic period.

(c) The scholarship may be granted to as many dependents of one qualifying law enforcement officer as are eligible and who comply with the requirements of this article.

(d) The scholarship shall be administered by the commission.

(e) (1) Availability of the scholarship to eligible dependents is subject to an annual appropriation to the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Program in the annual Education Trust Fund Appropriation Act, which shall not exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000).

(2) Available money for the scholarship may be supplemented by private donations.

(3) Reimbursement shall be made at the end of each academic period by the commission to a participating institution by certified invoice submitted by the institution that is substantiated by the name of each student receiving the scholarship, with the amount claimed for each student.

(f) Participating institutions shall enter into a contract with the commission and agree to provide any records to the commission upon request.

§36-21-223

The scholarship application by an eligible dependent shall be submitted to the commission and include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1) Documentation from the participating institution that the applicant has been accepted for admission and is enrolled as a student.



HB98 INTRODUCED

(2) A copy of a completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) submitted to the United States Department of Education, or documentation from the participating institution that the applicant has completed a FAFSA.

(3) Documentation, as determined by rules adopted by the commission, that a spouse or parent is a qualifying law enforcement officer.

(4) In the case of a dependent who is a current or surviving spouse, a certified copy of the marriage certificate to a qualifying law enforcement officer.

(5) In the case of a dependent who is a natural or adoptive child, a certified copy of the birth certificate or the decree of adoption showing the parental relationship to a qualifying law enforcement officer.

(6) A signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) release form.

§36-21-224

(a) Approval for the scholarship shall be granted to an eligible dependent upon submission of the documentation required under Section 36-11-223 and shall continue for each academic period for which the scholarship may be available as provided in Section 36-11-222(a) on the following conditions:

(1) That the recipient complies with the Standards of Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as required for Title IV benefits under the federal Higher Education Act and as defined by the participating institution for each academic period for which the recipient is enrolled.

(2) That the recipient maintain his or her full-time



HB98 INTRODUCED

residency in the state.

(3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for which the scholarship is available pursuant to Section 36-11-222(a) within 66 months of the approval of the application, in the absence of a formal waiver of this condition by the commission due to injury, illness, the necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other extraordinary circumstance.

(b) If the recipient's eligibility is based on spousal status, eligibility shall end if the marriage to the qualifying law enforcement officer is terminated by a decree of divorce or, in the case of a recipient who is a surviving spouse, remarriage.

(c) A recipient may maintain eligibility for the scholarship while changing his or her approved postsecondary program or transferring to another participating institution, or both, only if the change or transfer is approved by the appropriate participating institution no later than the beginning of the fifth semester or the ninth quarter for which the scholarship would be available.

§36-21-225

(a) The responsibilities of the commission include, but may not be limited to, the following:

(1) Receive scholarship applications.

(2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

(3) Waive scholarship requirements as provided in this article.

(4) Enter into and administer contracts with



HB98 INTRODUCED

197 participating institutions.

198 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
199 program.

200 (6) Publicize the scholarship by written materials or
201 electronic means and accept donations.

202 (b) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
203 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
204 article.

205 §36-21-226

206 The commission shall report to the Legislature, by
207 January 1 of each year, all of the following:

208 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
209 fiscal year.

210 (2) The number of applicants approved as of the
211 reporting date of the current fiscal year.

212 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
213 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
214 the scholarship.

215 (4) The cost of the previous fiscal year's expenditures
216 to the program, arranged by each participating institution and
217 the number of recipients who are enrolled with each
218 participating institution.

219 (5) The number of recipients in the previous fiscal
220 year who completed an approved postsecondary program by being
221 awarded a certificate or a degree.

222 §36-21-227

223 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
224 Scholarship Fund is created in the State Treasury. All monies



HB98 INTRODUCED

received by the commission pursuant to this article or otherwise from any source permitted by this article shall be deposited into the State Treasury to the credit of the fund. Amounts deposited into the fund shall be budgeted and allotted in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12, Code of Alabama 1975.

(b) The commission may accept additional funding for the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Program from public and private sources, including appropriations, loans, federal gifts, grants, corporate sponsorships, and individual donations.

(c) The commission shall ensure that proceeds received from Section 2 shall be the first funds expended for the program each fiscal year.

Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64, 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, upon application to the judge of probate or license commissioner, compliance with motor vehicle registration and licensing laws, payment of regular fees required by law for license plates for private passenger or pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and payment of an additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50), owners of motor vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of Alabama shall upon request be issued a personalized blackout license plate.

(b) The additional blackout license plate fee shall be distributed in the following manner:

(1) Two and one-half percent commission, provided by Section 40-12-269(a) (1).

(2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents



HB98 INTRODUCED

253 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

254 (3) Administrative costs of one dollar (\$1) to the
255 Department of Revenue.

256 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be
257 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
258 Scholarship Fund.

259 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
260 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
261 white text.

262 (d) The blackout plates shall be issued, printed, and
263 processed like other personalized plates provided for by law
264 and shall be furnished for the licensing year commencing
265 January 1, 2027.

266 (e) The Department of Revenue may adopt any rules
267 necessary to administer this section.

268 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
269 1, 2026.