

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



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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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A BILL

31 TO BE ENTITLED

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.



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

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

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

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

72 b. Either of the following:

73 1. A natural or adopted child of a qualifying law
74 enforcement officer, who is under 27 years of age, and who has
75 resided in the state for at least the two preceding years; or
76 2. The current or surviving spouse of a qualifying law
77 enforcement officer who has resided in the state for at least
78 the two preceding years.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

101 §36-21-222

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

134 §36-21-223

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

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



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

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

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

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

157 §36-21-224

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

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

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



169 residency in the state.

170 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
171 which the scholarship is available pursuant to Section
172 36-11-222(a) within 66 months of the approval of the
173 application, in the absence of a formal waiver of this
174 condition by the commission due to injury, illness, the
175 necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other extraordinary
176 circumstance.

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

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

189 §36-21-225

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

192 (1) Receive scholarship applications.

193 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

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

196 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with

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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



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

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

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

239 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
240 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, upon application to the judge of probate
241 or license commissioner, compliance with motor vehicle
242 registration and licensing laws, payment of regular fees
243 required by law for license plates for private passenger or
244 pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and payment of an
245 additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50), owners of motor
246 vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of Alabama shall
247 upon request be issued a personalized blackout license plate.

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

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

252 (2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents

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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.