

1 SB357  
2 190268-1  
3 By Senators Coleman-Madison, Figures and Singleton  
4 RFD: Finance and Taxation Education  
5 First Read: 01-MAR-18

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8 SYNOPSIS: This bill would create the Alabama  
9 Commitment Scholarship program to provide  
10 scholarships to graduating high school seniors to  
11 attend a two-year community college in Alabama.

12  
13 A BILL  
14 TO BE ENTITLED  
15 AN ACT

16  
17 To create the Alabama Commitment Scholarship  
18 program; to provide that the Alabama Commission on Higher  
19 Education administer this program; and to create the Alabama  
20 Commitment Scholarship Fund.

21 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

22 Section 1. (a) This act shall be known and may be  
23 cited as the "Alabama Commitment Scholarship Act of 2018".

24 (b) As used in this section:

25 (1) "ACHE" means the Alabama Commission on Higher  
26 Education.

1           (2) "Eligible postsecondary institution" means a  
2 state-supported two-year community or technical college  
3 operated by the Alabama Community College System.

4           (3) "Resident" means a student as defined by  
5 administrative rules promulgated by ACHE.

6           (c) There is established the Alabama Commitment  
7 Scholarship Program for Alabama residents seeking an  
8 associate's degree, certificate or diploma from an eligible  
9 postsecondary institution. ACHE shall administer this program  
10 under the following terms and conditions:

11           (1) To be eligible for the scholarship a student  
12 shall be admitted to and enrolled full-time in an eligible  
13 postsecondary program in the fall term following graduation  
14 from an Alabama high school, or completion of high school as  
15 an Alabama home school student, or obtaining a GED or  
16 equivalent diploma; provided, that the student obtains the GED  
17 or equivalent diploma prior to the student reaching 20 years  
18 of age. Exceptions to initial enrollment may be made for  
19 extenuating circumstances as provided by administrative rule  
20 promulgated by ACHE;

21           (2) Students applying for the scholarship shall  
22 complete the Alabama Commitment application in their initial  
23 year of enrollment. Students shall complete the Free  
24 Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each academic year  
25 in which they seek to receive the Alabama Commitment  
26 Scholarship;

1           (3) To continue to receive an Alabama Commitment  
2       Scholarship, a student shall maintain satisfactory academic  
3       progress as determined by administrative rules promulgated by  
4       ACHE;

5           (4) Alabama Commitment Scholarship recipients shall  
6       participate in mentoring and community service programs under  
7       administrative rules promulgated by ACHE;

8           (5) Subject to the amounts appropriated by the  
9       legislature, an Alabama Commitment Scholarship shall be the  
10      cost of tuition and mandatory fees at the eligible  
11      postsecondary institution attended less all other gift aid, as  
12      defined by administrative rule; provided however that no  
13      student may receive more than \$2,000 annually in Alabama  
14      Commitment Scholarship funding. Gift aid shall be credited  
15      first to the student's tuition and mandatory fees;

16          (6) Except as otherwise provided, the student shall  
17      be eligible for an Alabama Commitment Scholarship until the  
18      occurrence of the first of the following events:

19           a. The student has earned a certificate, diploma, or  
20      associate degree; or

21           b. The sum of the number of years the student  
22      attended a postsecondary institution, exclusive of approved  
23      leaves of absence, equals two and one-half years from the date  
24      of the student's initial enrollment at an eligible  
25      postsecondary institution;

26          (7) An Alabama Commitment Scholarship student who  
27      has an approved medical or personal leave of absence from an

1 eligible postsecondary institution may continue to receive the  
2 scholarship upon resuming the student's education at an  
3 eligible postsecondary institution, so long as the student  
4 continues to meet all applicable eligibility requirements. The  
5 sum of all approved leaves of absence shall not exceed six (6)  
6 months.

7 (8) Except for a medical or personal leave of  
8 absence, as approved by an eligible postsecondary institution,  
9 an Alabama Commitment Scholarship student shall maintain  
10 continuous enrollment at an eligible postsecondary  
11 institution.

12 (d) There is established in the State Treasury the  
13 Alabama Commitment Scholarship Fund for the purpose of funding  
14 the Alabama Commitment Scholarship Program. Funds appropriated  
15 for the Alabama Commitment Scholarship program, including  
16 matching funds or other appropriations made by the  
17 legislature, may be placed in this fund, the interest income  
18 from which shall be used to provide scholarships under this  
19 section. Unexpended funds remaining in this fund in any fiscal  
20 year shall not revert, but shall remain available in the  
21 Alabama Commitment Scholarship program for scholarship  
22 expenditures in subsequent fiscal years.

23 Section 2. ACHE is authorized to promulgate rules to  
24 effectuate the purposes of Section 1 of this act. All such  
25 rules shall be promulgated in accordance with the Alabama  
26 Administrative Procedures Act.

1                   Section 3. If the sum of all financial aid,  
2 including an Alabama Commitment Scholarship, exceeds the  
3 institutionally defined total cost of attendance at the  
4 eligible postsecondary institution the scholarship or grant  
5 recipient is attending, then the amount of the Alabama  
6 Commitment Scholarship provided shall be reduced so that the  
7 total financial aid actually received by the student does not  
8 exceed the institutionally defined total cost of attendance.

9                   Section 4. The provisions of this act shall not be  
10 construed to be an appropriation of funds and no funds shall  
11 be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless the funds  
12 are specifically appropriated by the legislature.

13                   Section 5. This act is effective immediately  
14 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its  
15 otherwise becoming law.