

HB188 ENGROSSED



1 HB188
2 MU6AWHW-2
3 By Representatives Treadaway, Wilcox, Hurst, Wood (R),
4 Yarbrough
5 RFD: Ways and Means Education
6 First Read: 05-Feb-25



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A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

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

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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

Article 11.

§36-21-220

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

§36-21-221



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29 As used in this article, the following terms have the
30 following meanings:

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

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

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

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

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

47 b. Either of the following:

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

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

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



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57 (6) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION. An accredited public or
58 private postsecondary vocational school, technical school,
59 community or junior college, college, or university that
60 enters into a contract with the board to accept reimbursement
61 for a scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.

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

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

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

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

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

76 §36-21-222

77 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
78 Scholarship is established to reimburse participating
79 institutions on behalf of eligible dependents the cost of
80 required educational expenses for up to eight semesters or 12
81 quarters in an approved postsecondary program.

82 (b) (1) The scholarship shall pay required educational
83 expenses after any other amounts from public or private
84 scholarships, grants, aid, or gifts awarded by third parties



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85 to the eligible dependent for the academic period have been
86 applied.

87 (2) The amount for each recipient shall be capped at
88 three thousand dollars (\$3,000) for each academic period.

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

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

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

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

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

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

109 §36-21-223

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

132 §36-21-224

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

138 (1) That the recipient complies with the Standards of
139 Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) as required for Title IV
140 benefits under the federal Higher Education Act and as defined



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141 by the participating institution for each academic period for
142 which the recipient is enrolled.

143 (2) That the recipient maintain his or her full-time
144 residency in the state.

145 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
146 which the scholarship is available pursuant to Section
147 36-11-222(a) within 66 months of the approval of the
148 application, in the absence of a formal waiver of this
149 condition by the commission due to injury, illness, the
150 necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other extraordinary
151 circumstance.

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

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

164 §36-21-225

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

167 (1) Receive scholarship applications.

168 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.



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

171 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with
172 participating institutions.

173 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
174 program.

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

177 (b) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
178 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
179 article.

180 §36-21-226

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

183 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
184 fiscal year.

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

187 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
188 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
189 the scholarship.

190 (4) The cost of the previous fiscal year's expenditures
191 to the program, arranged by each participating institution and
192 the number of recipients who are enrolled with each
193 participating institution.

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



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197 §36-21-227

198 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
199 Scholarship Fund is created in the State Treasury. All monies
200 received by the commission pursuant to this article or
201 otherwise from any source permitted by this article shall be
202 deposited into the State Treasury to the credit of the fund.
203 Amounts deposited into the fund shall be budgeted and allotted
204 in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and
205 Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12, Code of Alabama 1975.

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

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

214 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
215 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, upon application to the judge of probate
216 or license commissioner, compliance with motor vehicle
217 registration and licensing laws, payment of regular fees
218 required by law for license plates for private passenger or
219 pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and payment of an
220 additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50), owners of motor
221 vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of Alabama shall
222 upon request be issued a personalized blackout license plate.

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



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

227 (2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents
228 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

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

231 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be
232 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
233 Scholarship Fund.

234 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
235 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
236 white text.

237 (d) The blackout plates shall be issued, printed, and
238 processed like other personalized plates provided for by law
239 and shall be furnished for the licensing year commencing
240 January 1, 2026.

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

243 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
244 1, 2025.



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House of Representatives

Read for the first time and referred05-Feb-25
to the House of Representatives
committee on Ways and Means
Education
Read for the second time and placed12-Feb-25
on the calendar:
3 amendments
Read for the third time and passed18-Feb-25
as amended
Yeas 101
Nays 0
Abstains 0

John Treadwell
Clerk