

HB188 INTRODUCED



1 HB188
2 RCAWYYN-1
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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SYNOPSIS:

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

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

This bill would also provide for the administration of this scholarship by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education; and would require annual reporting on the program to the Legislature.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to scholarships; to establish a program to



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29 grant tuition money to dependents of law enforcement officers
30 for use in participating public or private institutions of
31 higher education in the State of Alabama; to provide
32 requirements for scholarship eligibility; to provide
33 scholarship conditions and terms; and to provide for
34 administration of the program by the Alabama Commission on
35 Higher Education.

36 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

37 Section 1. Article 11, commencing with Section
38 36-21-220, is added to Chapter 21 of Title 36, Code of Alabama
39 1975, to read as follows:

40 Article 11.

41 §36-11-220

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

44 §36-11-221

45 As used in this article, the following terms have the
46 following meanings:

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

48 (2) APPROVED POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM. Any training or
49 course of study at the undergraduate level directed toward a
50 vocational certification, an associate degree, or a
51 baccalaureate degree offered by a participating institution.
52 The term includes an academic major.

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

56 (4) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT. An individual who is ineligible



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57 for the educational assistance provided under Article 5 of
58 this chapter who, on the date of applying for the scholarship
59 provided under this article, is:

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

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

66 (5) LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCY. Any state, municipal, or
67 county law enforcement department or agency.

68 (6) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION. An accredited public or
69 private postsecondary vocational school, technical school,
70 community or junior college, college, or university that
71 enters into a contract with the board to accept reimbursement
72 for a scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.

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

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

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

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

84 (8) REQUIRED EDUCATIONAL EXPENSES. Costs charged for



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85 tuition, mandatory fees, and books or electronic and digital
86 media required on a course syllabus.

87 §36-11-222

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

112 (3) Reimbursement shall be made at the end of each



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113 academic period by the commission to a participating
114 institution by certified invoice submitted by the institution
115 that is substantiated by the name of each student receiving
116 the scholarship, with the amount claimed for each student.

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

120 §36-11-223

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

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

127 (2) A copy of a completed Free Application for Federal
128 Student Aid (FAFSA) submitted to the United States Department
129 of Education.

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

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

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

140 (6) A copy of a completed Family Educational Rights and



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141 Privacy Act (FERPA) release form submitted to the
142 participating institution.

143 §36-11-224

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

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

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

156 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
157 which the scholarship is available pursuant to Section
158 36-11-222(a) within 66 months of the approval of the
159 application, in the absence of a formal waiver of this
160 condition by the commission due to injury, illness, the
161 necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other extraordinary
162 circumstance.

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

168 (c) A recipient may maintain eligibility for the



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169 scholarship while changing his or her approved postsecondary
170 program or transferring to another participating institution,
171 or both, only if the change or transfer is approved by the
172 appropriate participating institution no later than the
173 beginning of the fifth semester or the ninth quarter for which
174 the scholarship would be available.

175 §36-11-225

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

178 (1) Receive scholarship applications.

179 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

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

182 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with
183 participating institutions.

184 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
185 program.

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

188 (b) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
189 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
190 article.

191 §36-11-226

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

194 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
195 fiscal year.

196 (2) The number of applicants approved as of the



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197 reporting date of the current fiscal year.

198 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
199 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
200 the scholarship.

201 (4) The cost of the previous fiscal year's expenditures
202 to the program, arranged by each participating institution and
203 the number of recipients who are enrolled with each
204 participating institution.

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

208 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October
209 1, 2025.