



**House Ways and Means Education Reported Substitute
for HB188**

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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 is ineligible
42 for the educational assistance provided under Article 5 of
43 this chapter who, on the date of applying for the scholarship
44 provided under this article, is:

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

73 §36-21-222

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

106 §36-21-223

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

129 §36-21-224

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

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

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



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141 residency in the state.

142 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
 143 which the scholarship is available pursuant to Section
 144 36-11-222(a) within 66 months of the approval of the
 145 application, in the absence of a formal waiver of this
 146 condition by the commission due to injury, illness, the
 147 necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other extraordinary
 148 circumstance.

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

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

161 §36-21-225

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

- 164 (1) Receive scholarship applications.
- 165 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.
- 166 (3) Waive scholarship requirements as provided in this
 167 article.
- 168 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with



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169 participating institutions.

170 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
171 program.

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

174 (b) The commission is authorized to adopt rules to
175 implement, administer, and interpret the requirements of this
176 article.

177 §36-21-226

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

180 (1) The number of applicants approved in the previous
181 fiscal year.

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

184 (3) The number of recipients, by the number of
185 remaining academic terms for which they may be eligible for
186 the scholarship.

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

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

194 §36-21-227

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



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

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

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

211 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
 212 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, upon application to the judge of probate
 213 or license commissioner, compliance with motor vehicle
 214 registration and licensing laws, payment of regular fees
 215 required by law for license plates for private passenger or
 216 pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and payment of an
 217 additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50), owners of motor
 218 vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of Alabama shall
 219 upon request be issued a personalized blackout license plate.

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

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

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



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225 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

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

228 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be
229 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
230 Scholarship Fund.

231 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
232 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
233 white text.

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

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

240 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
241 1, 2025.