

HB489 INTRODUCED



1 HB489
2 DGC6LHH-1
3 By Representative Baker
4 RFD: Education Policy
5 First Read: 19-Feb-26



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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, the Alabama Student Grant Program, administered by the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, awards grants to students to attend certain approved independent Alabama institutions of higher education.

This bill would add an independent postsecondary online institution located in Orange Beach, Alabama, to the list of institutions approved to participate in the program.

This bill would also make nonsubstantive, technical revisions to update the existing code language to current style.

A BILL
TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

Relating to the Alabama Student Grant Program, to amend Section 16-33A-1, Code of Alabama 1975, to add an independent postsecondary online institution located in Orange Beach, Alabama, to the list of institutions approved to participate in the program; and to make nonsubstantive, technical revisions to update the existing code language to current



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29 style.

30 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

31 Section 1. Section 16-33A-1, Code of Alabama 1975, is
32 amended to read as follows:

33 "§16-33A-1

34 As used in this chapter, unless the context requires
35 otherwise, the following terms ~~shall~~ have the following
36 meanings ~~respectively ascribed to them by this section~~:

37 (1) ACHE. The Alabama Commission on Higher Education.

38 (2) ALABAMA RESIDENT. ~~A person~~ An individual who has
39 been domiciled in the State of Alabama for a period of at
40 least 12 consecutive months immediately preceding application
41 for a grant under the ~~Alabama Student Grant Program~~ program.
42 ~~The~~ ACHE shall ~~promulgate~~ adopt and enforce ~~regulations~~ rules
43 further defining and limiting the term domicile so as to limit
44 the benefits of this ~~legislation~~ chapter to bona fide Alabama
45 ~~citizens~~ residents, based upon criteria including residency of
46 parents and guardians, voter registration of students and
47 parents, ~~driver's~~ driver license registration, and other facts
48 indicating bona fide ~~citizenship~~ residency.

49 (3) APPROVED INSTITUTION. a. Includes all of the
50 following:

51 1. Any independent nonprofit postsecondary institution
52 of higher learning located in the State of Alabama which is
53 accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern
54 Association of Colleges and Schools, ~~any~~.

55 2. Any independent nonprofit postsecondary institution
56 of higher learning whose credits are accepted by at least



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57 three other institutions which are accredited by the
58 Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges
59 and Schools, ~~or any.~~

60 3. Any independent postsecondary institution of higher
61 learning with a permanent facility offering classroom
62 instruction located in Montgomery County, Alabama, which has
63 been incorporated and in continuous operation for over 50
64 years and which has been accredited for over 10 years by the
65 Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges
66 and Schools, prior to July 1, 2010.

67 4. Any independent postsecondary online institution
68 located in Orange Beach, Alabama, that is accredited by the
69 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on
70 Colleges.

71 ~~b. Such an~~ An approved institution must have an academic
72 curriculum which is not comprised principally of sectarian
73 instruction or preparation of students for a sectarian
74 vocation and which does not award primarily theologian or
75 seminarian degrees. To the extent that any ~~such~~ institution
76 may have a religious or denominational affiliation, ~~it~~ the
77 institution must perform essentially secular educational
78 functions which are distinct and separable from religious
79 activity. ~~Such an~~ An approved institution must not
80 discriminate in its admissions practices on the basis of
81 religious or denominational preference.

82 c. No independent postsecondary institution of higher
83 learning shall be considered an approved institution during
84 any fiscal year in which ~~it~~ the institution receives a direct



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85 appropriation from the State of Alabama. Nothing contained
86 ~~herein in this subdivision~~ shall be construed to limit,
87 replace, or diminish any direct state appropriation now being
88 made or which shall hereafter be made to any independent
89 institution of higher learning.

90 (4) ELIGIBLE STUDENT. Any applicant for a grant under
91 the ~~Alabama Student Grant Program~~ program who:

92 a. Has obtained a certificate of graduation from a
93 secondary school or the recognized equivalent of ~~such~~
94 graduation; ~~and~~

95 b. Is classified as an undergraduate student, as
96 defined in this chapter; ~~and~~

97 c. Is an Alabama resident, as defined in this chapter;
98 ~~and~~

99 d. Is a citizen of the United States or in the process
100 of becoming a citizen of the United States; ~~and~~

101 e. Is enrolled or accepted for enrollment as a
102 full-time or part-time student in a program of at least six
103 months' duration in an approved institution as defined in this
104 chapter; and

105 f. Is not enrolled and does not intend to enroll in a
106 course of study leading to an undergraduate degree in theology
107 or divinity.

108 (5) FULL-TIME STUDENT. An individual student who meets
109 the criteria established by definitions, and rules, ~~and~~
110 ~~regulations to be established~~ adopted by ~~the~~ ACHE.

111 (6) GRANT. A monetary award under the ~~Alabama Student~~
112 ~~Grant Program~~ program to an approved institution on behalf of



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113 and to the credit of an eligible student pursuant to this
114 chapter.

115 (7) INSTITUTIONAL RELATED EXPENSES. Nonsectarian
116 educational expenses, including, but not limited to, tuition,
117 mandatory fees, room and board, transportation, books and
118 supplies, and other incidental nonsectarian education expenses
119 anticipated by an eligible student.

120 (8) PART-TIME STUDENT. An individual student who meets
121 all qualifications as an eligible student and who meets the
122 further criteria to be established by ~~the~~ ACHE.

123 (9) PROGRAM. The Alabama Student Grant Program,
124 including the administration thereof.

125 (10) UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT. Any individual student who
126 meets all other qualifications as an eligible student and has
127 not received a baccalaureate degree or its equivalent."

128 Section 2. This act shall become effective on October
129 1, 2026.