

HB98 ENROLLED



1 HB98
2 L58X1AA-2
3 By Representative Treadaway
4 RFD: Ways and Means Education
5 First Read: 13-Jan-26
6 PFD: 06-Jan-26



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1 Enrolled, An Act,

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4 Relating to scholarships; to establish a program to
5 grant tuition money to eligible dependents of law enforcement
6 officers for use in participating public institutions of
7 higher education in the State of Alabama; to provide
8 requirements for scholarship eligibility; to provide
9 scholarship conditions and terms; to provide for
10 administration of the program by the Alabama Commission on
11 Higher Education; to establish the Alabama Law Enforcement
12 Officers' Family Scholarship Fund; and to establish a
13 distinctive blackout license plate to fund the scholarship
14 program.

15 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

16 Section 1. Article 11, commencing with Section
17 36-21-220, is added to Chapter 21 of Title 36, Code of Alabama
18 1975, to read as follows:

19 Article 11.

20 §36-21-220

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

23 §36-21-221

24 As used in this article, the following terms have the
25 following meanings:

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

27 (2) APPROVED POSTSECONDARY PROGRAM. Any for-credit or
28 noncredit workforce or career training program or course of



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29 study at the undergraduate level directed toward a vocational
30 certification, an associate degree, or a bachelor's degree
31 offered by a participating institution. The term includes an
32 academic major.

33 (3) COMMISSION. The Alabama Commission on Higher
34 Education, including the commission's Office of Student
35 Assistance.

36 (4) ELIGIBLE DEPENDENT. An individual who, on the date
37 of applying for the scholarship provided under this article,
38 is:

39 a. Not eligible for the police officers' survivors
40 educational assistance provided under Article 5 of this
41 chapter; and

42 b. Either of the following:

43 1. A natural or adopted child of a qualifying law
44 enforcement officer, who is under 24 years of age and who has
45 resided in the state for at least the five preceding years.

46 2. The current or surviving spouse of a qualifying law
47 enforcement officer who has resided in the state for at least
48 the five preceding years.

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

52 (6) PARTICIPATING INSTITUTION. An accredited public
53 postsecondary vocational school, technical school, community
54 or junior college, college, or university that enters into a
55 contract with the commission to accept reimbursement for a
56 scholarship awarded to an eligible dependent.



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57 (7) QUALIFYING LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER. The term
58 includes any law enforcement officer, as defined in Section
59 13A-11-38:

60 a. Who, on or after January 1, 2026, is employed
61 full-time for at least 15 years by a law enforcement agency in
62 the state; or

63 b. Who, having been employed full-time for at least 15
64 years by a law enforcement agency in the state, has been
65 separated for no more than 10 years from full-time employment
66 as a law enforcement officer due to resignation, retirement,
67 or death, unless the individual was terminated from final
68 employment as a law enforcement officer pursuant to a
69 disciplinary action.

70 (8) TUITION AND MANDATORY FEES. Costs charged for
71 tuition and mandatory fees that are assessed for all students
72 at the participating institution. The term does not include
73 differential tuition or department-specific or course-specific
74 fees, or books, equipment, or supplies.

75 §36-21-222

76 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
77 Scholarship is established to pay on behalf of eligible
78 dependents the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for up to
79 eight semesters or 12 quarters in an approved postsecondary
80 program.

81 (b) (1) The scholarship shall pay tuition and mandatory
82 fees after any other amounts from public or private
83 scholarships, grants, aid, or gifts awarded by third parties
84 to the eligible dependent for the academic period have been



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85 applied.

86 (2)a. The amount for each recipient shall be capped at
87 two thousand five hundred dollars (\$2,500) for each academic
88 period.

89 b. Notwithstanding paragraph a., if the recipient
90 qualifies for a discount on tuition and mandatory fees because
91 the recipient's eligibility is based upon the qualifying law
92 enforcement officer's employment by a law enforcement agency
93 that serves a postsecondary institution, the amount shall be
94 capped at one thousand five hundred dollars (\$1,500) for each
95 academic period. This amount may be used for tuition and
96 mandatory fees at any participating institution.

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

100 (d) The scholarship shall be administered by the
101 commission.

102 (e) (1) Availability of the scholarship to eligible
103 dependents is conditioned, pursuant to Section 36-21-227, on
104 funds available in the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers'
105 Family Scholarship Fund.

106 (2) Reimbursement from the Alabama Law Enforcement
107 Officers' Family Scholarship Fund shall be made at the end of
108 each academic period by the commission to a participating
109 institution by certified invoice submitted by the institution
110 that is substantiated by the name of each student receiving
111 the scholarship, with the amount claimed for each student.

112 (f) Participating institutions shall enter into a



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113 contract with the commission and agree to provide any records
114 to the commission upon request.

115 §36-21-223

116 The scholarship application by an eligible dependent
117 shall be submitted to the commission and include, but not be
118 limited to, the following:

119 (1) Documentation from the participating institution
120 that the applicant has been accepted for admission and is
121 enrolled as a student.

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

126 (3) Documentation, as determined by rules adopted by
127 the commission, that a spouse or parent is a qualifying law
128 enforcement officer.

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

132 (5) In the case of a dependent who is a natural or
133 adopted child, a certified copy of the birth certificate or
134 the decree of adoption showing the parental relationship to a
135 qualifying law enforcement officer.

136 (6) A signed Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
137 (FERPA) release form.

138 §36-21-224

139 (a) Approval for the scholarship shall be granted to an
140 eligible dependent upon submission of the documentation



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141 required under Section 36-21-223 and shall continue for the
142 number of academic periods for which the scholarship may be
143 available as provided in Section 36-21-222(a) upon meeting the
144 following conditions:

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

150 (2) That the recipient maintains his or her full-time
151 residency in the state.

152 (3) That the recipient completes the academic terms for
153 which the scholarship is available within 66 months of the
154 approval of the application, in the absence of a formal waiver
155 of this condition by the commission due to injury, illness,
156 the necessity of part-time enrollment, or some other
157 extraordinary circumstance.

158 (b) If the recipient's eligibility is based on spousal
159 status, eligibility shall end if the marriage to the
160 qualifying law enforcement officer is terminated by a decree
161 of divorce or, in the case of a recipient who is a surviving
162 spouse, remarriage.

163 (c) A recipient may maintain eligibility for the
164 scholarship while changing his or her approved postsecondary
165 program or transferring to another participating institution,
166 or both, only if the change or transfer is approved by the
167 appropriate participating institution no later than the
168 beginning of the fifth semester or the ninth quarter for which



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169 the scholarship would be available.

170 §36-21-225

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

173 (1) Receive scholarship applications.

174 (2) Make determinations on scholarship eligibility.

175 (3) Waive scholarship requirements as provided in this
176 article.

177 (4) Enter into and administer contracts with
178 participating institutions.

179 (5) Develop the necessary forms to administer the
180 program.

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

183 (b) The commission is authorized to charge a fee of no
184 more than three percent of the monies deposited to the credit
185 of the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship
186 Fund in a fiscal year for administering this article.

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

190 §36-21-226

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

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

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



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

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

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

207 §36-21-227

208 (a) The Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family
209 Scholarship Fund is created in the State Treasury. All monies
210 received by the commission from any source as provided in
211 subsections (b) or (c) or pursuant to Section 2 shall be
212 deposited into the State Treasury to the credit of the fund.
213 Amounts deposited into the fund shall be budgeted and allotted
214 in accordance with Sections 41-4-80 through 41-4-96 and
215 Sections 41-19-1 through 41-19-12.

216 (b)(1) Availability of the scholarship to eligible
217 dependents, beginning with the fiscal year that starts on
218 October 1, 2027, shall be subject to an annual appropriation
219 in the Education Trust Fund Appropriation Act which shall not
220 exceed ten million dollars (\$10,000,000). This provision does
221 not affect the availability of scholarships from funds
222 provided on hand prior to October 1, 2027.

223 (2) The annual appropriation provided in subdivision
224 (1) shall cease when monies received to the credit of the



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225 Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship Fund in
226 the preceding fiscal year pursuant to Section 2 are no less
227 than ten million dollars (\$10,000,000).

228 (c) The commission may accept additional funding for
229 the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family Scholarship
230 Program from public and private sources, including
231 appropriations, loans, federal gifts, grants, corporate
232 sponsorships, and individual donations.

233 Section 2. (a) Notwithstanding Sections 32-6-64,
234 32-6-67, and 32-6-68, Code of Alabama 1975, upon application
235 to the judge of probate or license commissioner, compliance
236 with motor vehicle registration and licensing laws, payment of
237 regular fees required by law for license plates for private
238 passenger or pleasure motor vehicles or motorcycles, and
239 payment of an additional annual fee of fifty dollars (\$50),
240 owners of motor vehicles or motorcycles who are residents of
241 Alabama, upon request, shall be issued a blackout license
242 plate.

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

245 (1) Two and one-half percent commission, provided by
246 Section 40-12-269(a)(1), Code of Alabama 1975.

247 (2) Manufacturing costs of one dollar and fifty cents
248 (\$1.50) to the Department of Corrections.

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

251 (4) The remainder of the additional fee shall be
252 deposited into the Alabama Law Enforcement Officers' Family



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253 Scholarship Fund.

254 (c) The Commissioner of Revenue shall prescribe a
255 suitable plate design that includes a black background with
256 white text.

257 (d) The blackout plates shall be issued, printed, and
258 processed like other plates provided for by law, may be
259 personalized, and shall be furnished for the licensing year
260 commencing January 1, 2027.

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

263 Section 3. This act shall become effective on October
264 1, 2026.

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

President and Presiding Officer of the Senate

House of Representatives

I hereby certify that the within Act originated in and was passed by the House 26-Feb-26.

John Treadwell
Clerk

Senate	<u>07-Apr-26</u>	Amended and Passed
House	<u>07-Apr-26</u>	Concurred in Senate Amendment