

## HCS SCS SB 733 -- HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

SPONSOR: Pearce (Kingery)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 8 to 4.

This substitute changes the laws regarding the Higher Education Academic Scholarship Program, commonly known as the Bright Flight Scholarship Program, and the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

### BRIGHT FLIGHT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

A student must be a Missouri resident in order to be eligible for a Bright Flight scholarship, and eligibility is extended to students who have received a General Education Development (GED) diploma or completed a homeschooling program. A student's qualifying score for the scholarship will be determined at the beginning of his or her last year of high school. Currently, a student scoring in the top 4% and 5% of Missouri ACT or SAT test-takers will receive a \$1,000 scholarship. The substitute clarifies that all students in the top 3% will receive their awards before any student in the top fourth or fifth percentiles receives any award.

Currently, a student is allowed to receive a renewal scholarship for three more years. The substitute allows renewal for as long as the student is in compliance with the program's renewal requirements. If a scholarship recipient cannot attend because of military service, the student will receive the scholarship if he or she returns to full-time status within six months after ending military service, verifying to the Coordinating Board for Higher Education that the service was satisfactorily completed.

### ACCESS MISSOURI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Currently, students at public four-year institutions, including Linn State Technical College, and private institutions receive a maximum amount of financial assistance awards of \$2,150 and \$4,600 respectively from the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program. Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, the substitute combines the categories for these schools into one with a \$2,850 maximum and a \$1,500 minimum award and increases the maximum award for community colleges from \$1,000 to \$1,300. Any award amount will be reduced by the amount of a student's payment from the A+ Schools Program or any successor program.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, the substitute revises the grade required for renewing an Access Missouri award

from a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) on a four-point scale to maintaining satisfactory academic progress for those scholarship recipients who have less than 60 semester hours while retaining the 2.5 GPA for those with 60 semester hours or more.

Satisfactory academic progress is to be defined by the institution of attendance but cannot be lower than a 2.0 on a four-point scale. The substitute clarifies that the required GPA for the renewal of other assistance programs will continue to be 2.5. In order to award the additional scholarships as a result of the revised GPA requirement, award amounts will be refigured within the annual appropriation amount.

The substitute repeals the current expiration date of the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program and specifies that any provisions regarding a termination date will not apply to that program.

The substitute contains an emergency clause for the provisions regarding the revised requirements for renewing an Access Missouri award.

FISCAL NOTE: Estimated Cost on General Revenue Fund of \$9,000 in FY 2011, \$18,000 in FY 2012, and \$27,000 in FY 2013. No impact on Other State Funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the language extending the scholarship to accommodate military service is patterned on an existing extension. Because of the state of the economy, the clarification of the funding priority is important.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Pearce; Department of Higher Education; University of Missouri; and Associated Students of the University of Missouri.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.