

By Representative Weissman

1                                   A bill to be entitled  
2           An act relating to students in community  
3           college aviation programs; creating a financial  
4           aid program for such students; providing for  
5           loans and grants; providing eligibility  
6           criteria; prescribing duties of community  
7           colleges and of the Division of Community  
8           Colleges; providing an appropriation; providing  
9           an effective date.

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11           WHEREAS, vocational programs offered through community  
12           colleges are intended to be cost-effective preparations for  
13           participants to receive training that will enable them to  
14           become productive members of the workforce, and

15           WHEREAS, students in aviation programs such as pilot  
16           training and aviation maintenance incur high expenses not  
17           customarily experienced by students in other programs, and

18           WHEREAS, the high cost of aviation programs denies  
19           access to these programs to qualified individuals who are  
20           economically disadvantaged, and

21           WHEREAS, minorities and women are underrepresented in  
22           community college aviation programs, and

23           WHEREAS, low-interest-rate loans would provide equal  
24           opportunities for participants, and

25           WHEREAS, there is a great need for additional workers  
26           trained in aviation programs and it is a benefit to the  
27           aviation industry to have a qualified workforce representing  
28           the people of Florida, NOW, THEREFORE,

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30           Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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1           Section 1. There is created a financial aid program  
2 for students enrolled in aviation programs in community  
3 colleges. Funds shall be made available to such students  
4 according to the following criteria:

5           (1) A student is eligible for a loan during the  
6 student's first term in an aviation program in an amount equal  
7 to 30 percent of tuition, fees, and costs. The loan must be  
8 repaid beginning no later than 6 months after the student  
9 leaves the program, and interest on the loan will be at the  
10 rate of 3 percent. A student in his or her second and  
11 subsequent terms in a program is eligible for grants in  
12 addition to any loan for which the student is eligible. Grants  
13 shall be in an amount of up to 30 percent of tuition, fees,  
14 and costs for the second term; up to 40 percent of tuition,  
15 fees, and costs for the third term; and up to 50 percent of  
16 tuition, fees, and costs for the fourth and any subsequent  
17 term. Grants are subject to availability of funds. If funds  
18 are insufficient to make grants available to students in the  
19 full amount authorized by this act, the community college  
20 shall make grants to all eligible students pro rata.

21           (2) In order to maintain eligibility for financial aid  
22 following the first term in an aviation program:

23           (a) Pilot training program students must be able to  
24 hold a second-class medical certificate issued by an aviation  
25 medical examiner; and

26           (b) All aviation students must:

27           1. Maintain a grade point average of no less than 3.0  
28 in aviation classes, including flight classes;

29           2. Be enrolled for at least 6 semester credit hours,  
30 or the equivalent in quarter hours; and

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1           3. Be making satisfactory progress, as determined by  
2 standards of the respective community college, toward  
3 successful completion of the aviation program.

4           Section 2. One-half of the moneys initially made  
5 available under this act to each community college with an  
6 aviation program shall be deposited into a fund from which  
7 loans are made available to students. Participating community  
8 colleges are encouraged to supplant these funds with grants  
9 and donations from private individuals, nonprofit entities,  
10 and corporate sources. It is the legislative intent that each  
11 loan fund become self-sustaining, with loan repayments  
12 providing a sufficient corpus that future loans can be made in  
13 amounts that account for increases in tuition, fees, and costs  
14 as well as increases in the number of enrolled students  
15 eligible for loans. The balance of the moneys initially made  
16 available under this act shall be disbursed to eligible  
17 students in the form of grants.

18           Section 3. The sum of \$750,000 is appropriated from  
19 the General Revenue Fund to the Division of Community Colleges  
20 of the Department of Education for distribution to eligible  
21 institutions in the State Community College System having  
22 aviation programs.

23           Section 4. This act shall take effect July 1, 2001.

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26           SENATE SUMMARY

27           Creates a financial aid program of loans and grants for  
28           aviation students in community colleges. Prescribes  
29           maximum grant amounts and interest rates on loans.  
30           Requires certain academic and other criteria to be met  
31           for continued aid eligibility.