

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to student tuition assistance;
3 creating the Access to Better Learning and
4 Education Grant Program; providing legislative
5 findings with respect to education provided by
6 for-profit colleges and universities; providing
7 for the Department of Education to administer
8 the grant program; providing requirements for
9 eligibility; providing for an annual
10 appropriation; requiring institutions to remit
11 undisbursed funds to the department; limiting
12 the period a student may receive a grant;
13 providing for implementation only to the extent
14 funded and authorized by law; providing an
15 effective date.

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

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19 Section 1. The Access to Better Learning and Education
20 Grant Program.--

21 (1) The Legislature finds and declares that
22 independent for-profit colleges and universities eligible to
23 participate in the Access to Better Learning and Education
24 Grant Program are an integral part of the higher education
25 system in this state and that a significant number of state
26 residents choose this form of higher education. The
27 Legislature further finds that strong, viable independent
28 for-profit colleges and universities reduce the tax burden on
29 the residents of the state. Because the Access to Better
30 Learning and Education Grant Program is not related to a
31 student's financial need or other criteria upon which

1 financial aid programs are based, it is the intent of the
2 Legislature that the Access to Better Learning and Education
3 Grant Program not be considered a financial aid program but
4 rather a tuition assistance program for state residents.

5 (2) The Access to Better Learning and Education Grant
6 Program shall be administered by the Department of Education.
7 The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for
8 administering the program.

9 (3) The department shall issue an access grant to any
10 full-time student seeking a baccalaureate degree who is
11 registered at a for-profit college or university that is
12 located in and chartered by the state and that is accredited
13 by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of
14 Colleges and Schools or who is registered at a nonprofit
15 college or university that is chartered out of the state, that
16 has been located in the state for 10 years or more, and that
17 is accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern
18 Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States
19 Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central
20 Association of Colleges and Schools, or the New England
21 Association of Colleges and Schools; that grants baccalaureate
22 degrees; that is not a state university or state community
23 college; and that has a secular purpose, if the receipt of
24 state aid by students at the institution would not have the
25 primary effect of advancing or impeding religion or result in
26 an excessive entanglement between the state and any religious
27 sect. Institutions eligible for the Access to Better Learning
28 and Education Grant Program in the initial year of funding
29 shall include only those for-profit colleges or universities
30 identified in this subsection. Nonprofit colleges or
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1 universities identified in this subsection shall be eligible
2 for financial support in the second year of funding.

3 (4) A person is eligible to receive an access grant
4 if:

5 (a) He or she meets the general requirements,
6 including residency, for student eligibility as provided in
7 section 1009.40, Florida Statutes, except as otherwise
8 provided in this section; and

9 (b)1. He or she is enrolled as a full-time
10 undergraduate student at an eligible college or university in
11 a program of study leading to a baccalaureate degree;

12 2. He or she is not enrolled in a program of study
13 leading to a degree in theology or divinity; and

14 3. He or she is making satisfactory academic progress
15 as defined by the college or university in which he or she is
16 enrolled.

17 (5)(a) The amount of the access grant issued to a
18 full-time student shall be an amount specified in the General
19 Appropriations Act. The access grant may be paid on a prorated
20 basis in advance of the registration period. The department
21 shall make payments to the college or university in which the
22 student is enrolled for credit to the student's account for
23 payment of tuition and fees. Institutions shall certify to the
24 department the amount of funds disbursed to each student and
25 shall remit to the department any undisbursed advances or
26 refunds within 60 days after the end of regular registration.
27 A student may not receive the award for more than 9 semesters
28 or 14 quarters, except as otherwise provided in section
29 1009.40(3), Florida Statutes.

30 (b) If the combined amount of the access grant issued
31 pursuant to this section and all other scholarships and grants

1 for tuition or fees exceeds the amount charged to the student
2 for tuition and fees, the department shall reduce the grant
3 issued under this section by an amount equal to the excess.

4 (6) If the number of eligible students exceeds the
5 total authorized in the General Appropriations Act, an
6 institution may use its own resources to assure that each
7 eligible student receives the full benefit of the grant amount
8 authorized.

9 (7) This section shall be implemented only to the
10 extent specifically funded and authorized by law.

11 Section 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a
12 law.

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