



HB 0917

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CHAMBER ACTION

The Committee on Education K-20 recommends the following:

**Committee Substitute**

Remove the entire bill and insert:

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to student tuition assistance; creating the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program; providing legislative findings with respect to education provided by for-profit colleges and universities; providing for the Department of Education to administer the grant program; providing requirements for eligibility; providing for the amount of grants to be specified in the General Appropriations Act; requiring institutions to remit undisbursed funds to the department; limiting the period for which a student may receive a grant; providing an effective date.

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

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

(1) The Legislature finds and declares that independent for-profit colleges and universities eligible to participate in



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29 | the Access to Better Learning and Education Grant Program are an  
30 | integral part of the higher education system in this state and  
31 | that a significant number of state residents choose this form of  
32 | higher education. The Legislature further finds that strong,  
33 | viable independent for-profit colleges and universities reduce  
34 | the tax burden on the residents of the state. Because the Access  
35 | to Better Learning and Education Grant Program is not related to  
36 | a student's financial need or other criteria upon which  
37 | financial aid programs are based, it is the intent of the  
38 | Legislature that the Access to Better Learning and Education  
39 | Grant Program not be considered a financial aid program, but  
40 | rather a tuition assistance program for state residents.

41 | (2) The Access to Better Learning and Education Grant  
42 | Program shall be administered by the Department of Education.  
43 | The State Board of Education shall adopt rules for administering  
44 | the program.

45 | (3) The department shall issue an access grant to any  
46 | full-time student seeking a baccalaureate degree who is  
47 | registered at a for-profit college or university that is located  
48 | in and chartered by the state and that is accredited by the  
49 | Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges  
50 | and Schools or who is registered at a nonprofit college or  
51 | university that is chartered out of the state, that has been  
52 | located in the state for 10 years or more, and that is  
53 | accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern  
54 | Association of Colleges and Schools, the Middle States  
55 | Association of Colleges and Schools, the North Central  
56 | Association of Colleges and Schools, or the New England



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57 Association of Colleges and Schools; that grants baccalaureate  
58 degrees; that is not a state university or state community  
59 college; and that has a secular purpose, if the receipt of state  
60 aid by students at the institution would not have the primary  
61 effect of advancing or impeding religion or result in an  
62 excessive entanglement between the state and any religious sect.  
63 Institutions eligible for the Access to Better Learning and  
64 Education Grant Program in the initial year of funding shall  
65 include only those for-profit colleges or universities  
66 identified in this subsection. Nonprofit colleges or  
67 universities identified in this subsection shall be eligible for  
68 financial support in the second year of funding.

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

70 (a) He or she meets the general requirements, including  
71 residency, for student eligibility as provided in s. 1009.40,  
72 Florida Statutes, except as otherwise provided in this section;  
73 and

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

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

79 3. He or she is making satisfactory academic progress as  
80 defined by the college or university in which he or she is  
81 enrolled.

82 (5)(a) The amount of the access grant issued to a full-  
83 time student shall be an amount specified in the General  
84 Appropriations Act. The access grant may be paid on a prorated



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85 basis in advance of the registration period. The department  
86 shall make payments to the college or university in which the  
87 student is enrolled for credit to the student's account for  
88 payment of tuition and fees. Institutions shall certify to the  
89 department the amount of funds disbursed to each student and  
90 shall remit to the department any undisbursed advances or  
91 refunds within 60 days after the end of regular registration. A  
92 student may not receive the award for more than 9 semesters or  
93 14 quarters, except as otherwise provided in s. 1009.40(3),  
94 Florida Statutes.

95 (b) If the combined amount of the access grant issued  
96 pursuant to this section and all other scholarships and grants  
97 for tuition or fees exceeds the amount charged to the student  
98 for tuition and fees, the department shall reduce the grant  
99 issued under this section by an amount equal to the excess.

100 (6) If the number of eligible students exceeds the total  
101 authorized in the General Appropriations Act, an institution may  
102 use its own resources to ensure that each eligible student  
103 receives the full benefit of the grant amount authorized.

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

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