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A bill to be entitled

An act relating to student financial assistance; creating s. 1009.892, F.S.; creating the Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Program; authorizing need-based scholarships for students enrolled in certified degree programs in targeted employment areas at Florida postsecondary educational institutions; providing for rules; providing for administration and funding of the program; providing student eligibility requirements for initial and renewal awards; providing an appropriation; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Section 1009.892, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

1009.892 Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Program.--

(1) This section shall be known by the popular name "Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Act."

(2) The Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Program is created to provide need-based financial assistance to any Florida high school graduate who merits recognition of high academic achievement and who enrolls in a certified degree program at an eligible Florida postsecondary educational institution within 3 years after graduation from high school.

(3) As used in this section:

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30 (a) "Certified degree program" means a degree program that:

31 1. Is certified by the Department of Education.

32 2. Addresses the need for support of degree programs in
 33 targeted employment areas.

34 3. Includes an internship component as described in this
 35 section.

36 (b) "Targeted employment" means employment in any of the
 37 following business areas:

38 1. Advanced manufacturing, including the following:

39 a. Automotive and electronics.

40 b. Aerospace technology.

41 c. Robotics.

42 d. Engineering design technology.

43 2. Life sciences, including the following:

44 a. Orthopedics or medical devices.

45 b. Biomedical research or development.

46 c. Pharmaceutical manufacturing.

47 d. Agribusiness.

48 e. Nanotechnology or molecular manufacturing.

49 3. Information technology, including the following:

50 a. Informatics.

51 b. Certified network administration.

52 c. Software development.

53 d. Fiber optics.

54 4. High-technology logistics, including the following:

55 a. High-technology distribution.

56 b. Efficient and effective flow and storage of goods,
 57 services, or information.

58 c. Intermodal ports.

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59 (4) The Department of Education shall administer the
60 Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs
61 Program according to rules and procedures established by the
62 State Board of Education pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54.
63 The department must advertise the availability of the scholarship
64 program and must notify students, teachers, parents, guidance
65 counselors, and principals or other relevant school
66 administrators of the criteria and application procedures. The
67 department must begin this process of notification no later than
68 January 1 of each year.

69 (5) Funds for the Innovation Florida Scholarships for
70 Developing High-Tech Jobs Program shall be appropriated annually
71 in the General Appropriations Act.

72 (a) If funds appropriated are not adequate to provide the
73 maximum allowable award to each eligible applicant, awards must
74 be prorated to each eligible applicant using the same percentage
75 reduction.

76 (b) Notwithstanding s. 216.301, if all funds allocated to
77 the Innovative Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs
78 Program are not used in any fiscal year, up to 20 percent of the
79 total allocation may be carried forward and used for awards in
80 the following year.

81 (6) The department shall issue awards from the scholarship
82 program annually. Annual awards may be for up to 45 semester
83 credit hours or the equivalent for the amount of demonstrated
84 unmet need not to exceed an amount equal to the average prior
85 academic year cost of tuition, fees, and assigned books and
86 supplies at state universities or such other amount as specified
87 in the General Appropriations Act. A demonstrated unmet need of

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88 less than \$100 shall render the applicant ineligible for a
89 scholarship. Before the registration period each semester, the
90 department shall transmit payment for each award to the president
91 or director of the postsecondary educational institution, or his
92 or her representative, except that the department may withhold
93 payment if the receiving institution fails to report or to make
94 refunds to the department as required in this section.

95 (a) Within 30 days after the end of regular registration
96 each semester, the educational institution shall certify to the
97 department the eligibility status of each student who receives an
98 award. After the end of the drop and add period, an institution
99 is not required to reevaluate or revise a student's eligibility
100 status, but must make a refund to the department if a student who
101 receives an award disbursement terminates enrollment for any
102 reason during an academic term and a refund is permitted by the
103 institution's refund policy.

104 (b) An institution that receives funds from the program
105 shall certify to the department the amount of funds disbursed to
106 each student and shall remit to the department any undisbursed
107 advances within 60 days after the end of regular registration.

108 (c) Each institution that receives moneys through this
109 program shall prepare an annual report that includes an annual
110 financial audit conducted by an independent certified public
111 accountant or the Auditor General. The report shall include an
112 audit of the institution's administration of the program and a
113 complete accounting of the moneys for the program. This report
114 must be submitted to the department annually by March 1. The
115 department may conduct its own annual audit of an institution's
116 administration of the program. The department may request a

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117 refund of any moneys overpaid to the institution for the program.
118 The department may suspend or revoke an institution's eligibility
119 to receive future moneys for the program if the department finds
120 that an institution has not complied with this section. The
121 institution must remit within 60 days any refund requested in
122 accordance with this subsection.

123 (7)(a) A student enrolled in 6 to 8 semester credit hours
124 may receive up to one-half of the maximum award; a student
125 enrolled in 9 to 11 credit hours may receive up to three-fourths
126 of the maximum award; and a student enrolled in 12 or more credit
127 hours may receive up to the full award.

128 (b) If a recipient transfers from one eligible institution
129 to another and continues to meet eligibility requirements, the
130 award must be transferred with the student.

131 (c) A student may use an award for summer term enrollment
132 if funds are available.

133 (d) Funds from a scholarship may not be used to pay for
134 remedial or college-preparatory coursework.

135 (8) To be eligible for an initial award, a student must:

136 (a) Be a Florida resident as defined in s. 1009.40 and
137 rules of the State Board of Education.

138 (b) Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its
139 equivalent as described in s. 1003.429, s. 1003.43, or s.
140 1003.435 unless:

141 1. The student is enrolled full-time in the early admission
142 program of an eligible postsecondary educational institution or
143 completes a home education program according to s. 1002.41; or

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144 2. The student earns a high school diploma from a non-
 145 Florida school while living with a parent who is on military or
 146 public service assignment away from Florida.

147 (c) Have achieved a cumulative grade point average of 3.0
 148 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent in high school courses
 149 designated by the Department of Education.

150 (d) Be accepted by and enroll in a Florida public or
 151 independent postsecondary educational institution identified by
 152 the Department of Education.

153 (e) Be enrolled for at least 6 semester credit hours or the
 154 equivalent in quarter hours or clock hours.

155 (f) Not have been found guilty of, or plead nolo contendere
 156 to, a felony charge, unless the student has been granted clemency
 157 by the Governor and Cabinet sitting as the Executive Office of
 158 Clemency.

159 (g) Apply for a scholarship from the program by high school
 160 graduation.

161 (9) A student is eligible to accept an initial award for 3
 162 years following high school graduation and to accept a renewal
 163 award for 7 years following high school graduation. A student who
 164 applies for an award by high school graduation and who meets all
 165 other eligibility requirements, but who does not accept his or
 166 her award, may reapply during subsequent application periods up
 167 to 3 years after high school graduation.

168 (10) Eligibility for renewal awards shall be based on
 169 continued academic achievement of a cumulative grade point
 170 average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent by the student
 171 at the eligible institution, continued eligibility for financial
 172 assistance pursuant to this section, and participation of the

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173 student for at least one summer during the course of the
 174 student's postsecondary education in an internship program that
 175 is relevant to at least one of the targeted employment areas as
 176 defined in this section. A student must work a minimum of 160
 177 hours during the summer internship.

178 (11) Employers must pay students in an internship program a
 179 wage at least 20 percent above the federal minimum wage.
 180 Employers with whom interns are placed may receive \$500 per
 181 student per summer.

182 Section 2. There is hereby appropriated from the General
 183 Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for fiscal year 2004-
 184 2005 the sum of \$30 million to implement the provisions of this
 185 act.

186 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2004.