

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to postsecondary education; creating the
 3 Florida Public Community College and Career Center Working
 4 Student Assistance Program; providing legislative intent;
 5 providing eligibility criteria for student assistance
 6 grants; amending s. 1009.50, F.S.; providing additional
 7 elements to be considered in awards of grants to community
 8 college students under the Florida Public Student
 9 Assistance Grant Program; providing an effective date.

10
 11 WHEREAS, the primary motive of federal student aid has been
 12 to further the country's economic health and competitiveness,
 13 and

14 WHEREAS, the investment made in grant aid would be offset
 15 by the students' future contribution to the economic development
 16 of the community, and

17 WHEREAS, unmet needs of students have forced a reliance on
 18 loans, NOW, THEREFORE,

19
 20 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

21
 22 Section 1. Florida Public Community College and Career
 23 Center Working Student Assistance Program.--

24 (1) (a) The Legislature recognizes the importance of the
 25 role of financial aid in ensuring access to postsecondary
 26 education and for student success. It is the intent of the
 27 Legislature that every student enrolled in a public community
 28 college have the resources necessary for graduation. The

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29 Legislature further recognizes that the financial consequence of
30 repaying loans, on which graduates have placed high reliance,
31 negatively influences these graduates' ability to provide
32 positive reinforcement for the state's economy.

33 (b) It is the purpose of this act to promote successful
34 student participation in the economic development of their
35 communities and the state by:

36 1. Providing financial support that will enable working
37 students to achieve their degrees and increase their earning and
38 spending potential.

39 2. Offering grant assistance to working students to
40 minimize the use of loans for entry-level training. Student
41 loans are more appropriate for students who have already moved
42 beyond entry-level jobs and have the income that will allow
43 repayment of loans.

44 (c) There is created the Florida Public Community College
45 and Career Center Working Student Assistance Program to provide
46 financial support for working students in this state. This
47 program will provide assistance to students whose employment
48 income makes them ineligible for federal and state grant
49 assistance and for whom their income is insufficient to commit
50 to long-term debt through any financial assistance through
51 federal or other loans.

52 (2)(a) Student grants through the program may be made to
53 students who enroll in at least 6 semester hours, or the
54 equivalent, or 10 hours per week of adult vocational training
55 per term and who meet other requirements for student eligibility
56 provided in this section or by rule. The grants shall be awarded

57 annually for an amount of need determined by the institution but
58 may not exceed an amount specified in the General Appropriations
59 Act.

60 (b) The primary purpose of this grant is to serve students
61 who are not receiving state or federal grants. Therefore, a
62 student applying for a grant under this section must also
63 complete the application for federal financial aid, so that
64 access to federal and state grants is the first avenue of
65 support. However, for purposes of this grant, the institutional
66 assessment of financial resources available to the student may
67 consider issues beyond that identified in the Free Application
68 for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) calculations to determine the
69 unmet need of the student. Such issues include, but are not
70 limited to:

71 1. The inability of family members to contribute to the
72 educational expenses of those under age 24 who must report
73 family income on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
74 (FAFSA) application.

75 2. Independent or dependent students whose income and
76 expenses only qualify the student for loan programs, but for
77 whom loan debt will be an unreasonable burden.

78 (c) Institutions shall prioritize awards to students
79 having the greatest need and may require students to meet
80 additional criteria for eligibility.

81 (3) The Department of Education shall develop a method to
82 distribute funds to community colleges and career centers and
83 adopt rules necessary to administer this section, and shall
84 require annual reports of such colleges and centers. Community

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85 college boards of trustees and school boards shall adopt rules
86 to administer this section locally.

87 Section 2. Paragraph (e) is added to subsection (2) of
88 section 1009.50, Florida Statutes, to read:

89 1009.50 Florida Public Student Assistance Grant Program;
90 eligibility for grants.--

91 (2)

92 (e) For community college students, Pell Grant
93 entitlements shall be considered in the award, but may not be
94 required as a condition of award. The maximum expected family
95 contribution established by the department for community
96 colleges shall recognize that students at community colleges are
97 working and supporting families and that the expected
98 contribution to education cannot equal that at other
99 institutions.

100 Section 3. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law.