

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Florida Work Experience Program;
3 amending s. 1009.77, F.S.; providing that certain students
4 in educator preparation institutes may participate in the
5 program; authorizing career centers that are operated by
6 district school boards to participate in the program;
7 lowering the minimum percentage of a participating
8 student's wages that must be reimbursed to employers;
9 prescribing requirements for career education programs
10 whose enrollees may participate in the work experience
11 program; providing an appropriation; providing an
12 effective date.

13
14 WHEREAS, the public community colleges and school district
15 postsecondary career centers were created by the state to
16 provide affordable access to higher education for Florida's
17 residents, and

18 WHEREAS, students seeking certificate workforce programs
19 have no access to state need-based financial aid and must rely
20 on student loans and scholarships to finance their higher
21 education, and

22 WHEREAS, student debt has escalated at an unprecedented
23 level, causing students to owe large sums of money that often
24 are difficult to repay, especially with compounding interest,
25 and

26 WHEREAS, the State of Florida needs a trained workforce,
27 and between 70 percent and 80 percent of jobs for the future
28 will require education beyond high school but less than a

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29 | baccalaureate degree, and

30 | WHEREAS, students who are willing to work for their need-
 31 | based financial aid in a field for which they are studying is of
 32 | benefit to the student, the employer, and the state, NOW,
 33 | THEREFORE,

34 |
 35 | Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

36 |
 37 | Section 1. Subsections (1), (4), (5), and (6) of section
 38 | 1009.77, Florida Statutes, are amended to read:

39 | 1009.77 Florida Work Experience Program.--

40 | (1) There is established the Florida Work Experience
 41 | Program to be administered by the Department of Education. The
 42 | purpose of the program is to introduce eligible students to work
 43 | experience that will complement and reinforce their educational
 44 | program and career goals and provide a self-help student aid
 45 | program. Such program shall be available to:

46 | (a) Any student attending a state university or community
 47 | college authorized by Florida law or a career center operated by
 48 | a district school board; ~~or~~

49 | (b) Any student attending a nonprofit Florida
 50 | postsecondary education institution that is eligible to
 51 | participate in either of the student assistance grant programs
 52 | established in ss. 1009.51 and 1009.52; or-

53 | (c) Any student enrolled in an educator preparation
 54 | institute who demonstrates financial need, even if he or she
 55 | already has an earned baccalaureate degree.

56 | (4) The participating postsecondary educational

57 institution shall be responsible for reimbursing employers for
58 student wages from moneys it receives from the trust fund
59 pursuant to subsection (8). Public elementary or secondary
60 school employers shall be reimbursed for 100 percent of the
61 student's wages by the participating institution. All other
62 employers shall be reimbursed for up to 70 percent of the
63 student's wages. When a college or university employs a student
64 on campus through this program, other student financial aid
65 funds may not be used to fund the institution's ~~30 percent~~
66 portion of the student's wages.

67 (5) The employer is responsible for furnishing the full
68 cost of any mandatory benefits. Such benefits may not be
69 considered part of the ~~30 percent~~ wage requirement total for
70 matching purposes.

71 (6) A student is eligible to participate in the Florida
72 Work Experience Program if the student:

73 (a) Is enrolled:

74 1. In a postsecondary career education program comprising
75 450 hours or more of instruction that is approved by the
76 Department of Education and offered through a career center
77 operated by a district school board, or through a community
78 college, as no less than a half-time student in good standing;
79 or

80 2. At an eligible college or university as no less than a
81 half-time undergraduate student in good standing.

82

83 However, a student may be employed during the break between two
84 consecutive terms or employed, although not enrolled, during a

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85 term if the student was enrolled at least half time during the
86 preceding term and preregisters as no less than a half-time
87 student for the subsequent academic term. A student who attends
88 an institution that does not provide preregistration shall
89 provide documentation of intent to enroll as no less than a
90 half-time student for the subsequent academic term.

91 (b) Meets the general requirements for student eligibility
92 as provided in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise provided in this
93 section.

94 (c) Demonstrates financial need.

95 (d) Maintains a 2.0 cumulative grade point average on a
96 4.0 scale for all postsecondary ~~college~~ work.

97 Section 2. For fiscal year 2007-2008, the sum of \$500,000
98 in recurring funds is appropriated from the General Revenue Fund
99 to the Florida Work Experience Program for community colleges
100 and postsecondary career centers operated by the school
101 districts for the purpose of providing need-based financial aid
102 to students working through this program.

103 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.