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2007

1 A bill to be entitled

2 An act relating to the Construction Education Scholarship
3 Program; creating s. 1009.5383, F.S.; creating the
4 scholarship program to award scholarships to eligible
5 students who enroll in construction-related postsecondary
6 education programs; requiring the Department of Education
7 to administer the scholarship program; creating the
8 Construction Education Scholarship Board to assist in the
9 establishment and implementation of the scholarship
10 program; providing student eligibility criteria; providing
11 requirements for issuance and disbursement of awards;
12 requiring annual financial audits; providing for
13 legislative appropriation and deposit in the State Student
14 Financial Assistance Trust Fund; providing an effective
15 date.

16
17 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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19 Section 1. Section 1009.5383, Florida Statutes, is created
20 to read:

21 1009.5383 Construction Education Scholarship Program;
22 Construction Education Scholarship Board.--

23 (1) The Construction Education Scholarship Program is
24 created to establish a scholarship program to reward any
25 eligible Florida high school graduate who enrolls in a
26 construction-related degree program, certificate program, or
27 applied technology program at an eligible Florida public or
28 private postsecondary educational institution.

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29 (2) The Department of Education shall administer the
30 Construction Education Scholarship Program according to rules
31 and procedures established by the Construction Education
32 Scholarship Board. The department must advertise the
33 availability of the scholarship program and notify students,
34 teachers, parents, guidance counselors, and principals or other
35 relevant school administrators of the student eligibility
36 criteria and application procedures. The department must begin
37 the process of notification no later than January 1 annually.

38 (3) (a) The Construction Education Scholarship Board is
39 created as a 12-member board to assist the department in the
40 establishment and implementation of the scholarship program.

41 (b) The Commissioner of Education shall appoint four
42 members to the board. Each member appointed by the commissioner
43 must be an educator from a union or nonunion construction
44 apprenticeship program or vocational, community college,
45 college, or university construction program and shall represent
46 the construction education industry.

47 (c) The President of the Senate shall appoint three
48 members who represent the construction industry and one member
49 who represents the general public.

50 (d) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall
51 appoint three members who represent the construction industry
52 and one member who represents the general public.

53 (e) Board members shall serve 4-year terms. However, for
54 the purpose of providing staggered terms, of the initial
55 appointments, the Commissioner of Education, the President of
56 the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives

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57 shall each appoint two members for 2-year terms, one member for
58 a 3-year term, and one member for a 4-year term. Any vacancy on
59 the board shall be filled by the original appointing authority.

60 (f) Any member who fails to attend three consecutive board
61 meetings without good cause may be removed from the board by the
62 board secretary.

63 (4) Student eligibility criteria established by the board
64 shall include, but not be limited to:

65 (a) An interest in developing a career in the construction
66 industry.

67 (b) Current or previous membership in one or more high
68 school sponsored clubs that promote construction, leadership, or
69 good citizenship.

70 (c) A clearly demonstrated record of acceptable student
71 behavior as defined by the board.

72 (5) The program shall provide scholarships to students for
73 the following types of construction education or training and
74 related activities through an application process administered
75 by the department:

76 (a) Union and nonunion apprenticeship programs.

77 (b) Vocational programs.

78 (c) Community college programs.

79 (d) College programs.

80 (e) University programs.

81 (f) Other education or training programs deemed
82 appropriate by the board.

83 (6) (a) The department shall annually issue awards through
84 the scholarship program. Annual awards may be for up to 45

85 semester credit hours or the equivalent per term. Before the
86 registration period each semester or term, the department shall
87 transmit payment for each award to the president or director of
88 the educational institution, or his or her representative,
89 except that the department may withhold payment if the receiving
90 institution fails to report or to make refunds to the department
91 as required in this section.

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

101 (c) An institution that receives funds through the
102 scholarship program shall certify to the department the amount
103 of funds disbursed to each student and shall remit to the
104 department any undisbursed advances within 60 days after the end
105 of regular registration.

106 (d) An institution that receives funds through the
107 scholarship program shall prepare an annual report that includes
108 an annual financial audit conducted by an independent certified
109 public accountant or the Auditor General. The report shall
110 include an audit of the institution's administration of the
111 scholarship program and a complete accounting of the funds for
112 the program. The report must be submitted to the department and

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113 the board by March 1. The department may conduct its own annual
114 audit of an institution's administration of the scholarship
115 program. The department may request a refund of any funds
116 overpaid to the institution for the scholarship program, which
117 amount must be remitted within 60 days after such request. The
118 department may suspend or revoke an institution's eligibility to
119 receive future funds for the scholarship program if the
120 department finds that an institution has not complied with this
121 section.

122 (7) Awards shall be in an amount determined by the board,
123 not to exceed \$1,500 per semester or the equivalent per term.

124 (8) If a recipient transfers from one eligible institution
125 to another and continues to meet eligibility requirements, the
126 award must be transferred with the student.

127 (9) Funds appropriated by the Legislature for the
128 Construction Education Scholarship Program shall be deposited in
129 the State Student Financial Assistance Trust Fund, which funds
130 shall be expended annually by the department in implementing the
131 scholarship program. The department may recover only its direct
132 expenses incurred in administering the scholarship program.
133 Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351, any
134 balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year that has
135 been allocated to the Construction Education Scholarship Program
136 shall remain therein and be available for carrying out the
137 purposes of this section.

138 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.