

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to student financial assistance; creating
 3 s. 1009.705, F.S.; creating the Innovation Florida
 4 Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Program;
 5 providing a matching grant program to award need-based
 6 scholarships to students enrolled in certified degree
 7 programs in targeted employment areas at Florida
 8 postsecondary educational institutions; providing
 9 definitions; providing for administration and funding of
 10 the program; requiring annual reports and financial audits
 11 of institutions receiving program funds; providing for
 12 issuance of awards; providing student eligibility
 13 requirements for initial and renewal awards; requiring a
 14 paid internship program; providing an appropriation;
 15 providing an effective date.

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

18
 19 Section 1. Section 1009.705, Florida Statutes, is created
 20 to read:

21 1009.705 Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing
 22 High-Tech Jobs Program.--

23 (1) This section may be cited as the "Innovation Florida
 24 Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs Act."

25 (2) The Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing
 26 High-Tech Jobs Program is created to provide need-based financial
 27 assistance, beginning with the 2008-2009 academic year, to any
 28 Florida high school graduate who merits recognition of high

29 academic achievement and who enrolls in a certified degree
 30 program at an eligible Florida postsecondary educational
 31 institution within 3 years after graduation from high school. The
 32 program shall provide donors with a matching grant incentive for
 33 contributions for scholarships to be awarded to students who
 34 participate in the program.

35 (3) As used in this section:

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

37 1. Is certified by the Department of Education.

38 2. Addresses the need for support of degree programs in
 39 targeted employment areas.

40 3. Includes an internship component as described in this
 41 section.

42 (b) "Targeted employment" means employment in any of the
 43 following business areas:

44 1. Advanced manufacturing, including the following:

45 a. Automotive and electronics.

46 b. Aerospace technology.

47 c. Robotics.

48 d. Engineering design technology.

49 2. Life sciences, including the following:

50 a. Orthopedics or medical devices.

51 b. Biomedical research or development.

52 c. Pharmaceutical manufacturing.

53 d. Agribusiness.

54 e. Nanotechnology or molecular manufacturing.

55 3. Information technology, including the following:

56 a. Informatics.

57 b. Certified network administration.

58 c. Software development.

59 d. Fiber optics.

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

61 a. High-technology distribution.

62 b. Efficient and effective flow and storage of goods,
63 services, or information.

64 c. Intermodal ports.

65 (4) The Department of Education shall administer the
66 Innovation Florida Scholarships for Developing High-Tech Jobs
67 Program according to rules and procedures established by the
68 State Board of Education. The department must advertise the
69 availability of the program and notify students, teachers,
70 parents, guidance counselors, and principals or other relevant
71 school administrators of the criteria and application procedures.
72 The department must begin this process of notification no later
73 than January 1 annually.

74 (5) (a) Funds for the Innovation Florida Scholarships for
75 Developing High-Tech Jobs Program, appropriated annually by the
76 Legislature, shall be deposited in the State Student Financial
77 Assistance Trust Fund to match private contributions on a dollar-
78 for-dollar basis. Pledged contributions are not eligible for
79 matching prior to the actual collection of the total funds. The
80 department shall receive all funds collected from private sources
81 for the purposes of this section and deposit such funds in the
82 trust fund. The Chief Financial Officer shall authorize
83 expenditures from the trust fund upon receipt of vouchers
84 approved by the department.

85 (b) Notwithstanding s. 216.301 and pursuant to s. 216.351,
86 any balance in the trust fund at the end of any fiscal year that
87 has been allocated to the Innovation Florida Scholarships for
88 Developing High-Tech Jobs Program shall remain in the trust fund
89 and shall be available for carrying out the purposes of the
90 program.

91 (c) If funds are not adequate to provide the maximum
92 allowable award to each eligible applicant, awards must be
93 prorated to each eligible applicant using the same percentage
94 reduction.

95 (6) The department shall annually issue awards through the
96 program. Annual awards may be for up to 45 semester credit hours
97 or the equivalent per term for the amount of demonstrated unmet
98 need not to exceed an amount equal to the average prior academic
99 year cost of tuition, fees, and assigned books and supplies at
100 the postsecondary educational institution or such other amount as
101 specified in the General Appropriations Act. A demonstrated unmet
102 need of less than \$100 shall render the applicant ineligible for
103 a scholarship. Before the registration period each semester or
104 term, the department shall transmit payment for each award to the
105 president or director of the postsecondary educational
106 institution, or his or her representative, except that the
107 department may withhold payment if the receiving institution
108 fails to report or to make refunds to the department as required
109 in this section.

110 (a) Within 30 days after the end of regular registration
111 each semester or term, the educational institution shall certify
112 to the department the eligibility status of each student who

113 receives an award. After the end of the drop and add period, an
114 institution is not required to reevaluate or revise a student's
115 eligibility status, but shall make a refund to the department if
116 a student who receives an award disbursement terminates
117 enrollment for any reason during an academic term and a refund is
118 permitted by the institution's refund policy.

119 (b) An institution that receives funds through the program
120 shall certify to the department the amount of funds disbursed to
121 each student and shall remit to the department any undisbursed
122 advances within 60 days after the end of regular registration.

123 (c) An institution that receives funds through this program
124 shall prepare an annual report that includes an annual financial
125 audit conducted by an independent certified public accountant or
126 the Auditor General. The report shall include an audit of the
127 institution's administration of the program and a complete
128 accounting of the funds for the program. The report must be
129 submitted to the department annually by March 1. The department
130 may conduct its own annual audit of an institution's
131 administration of the program. The department may request a
132 refund of any funds overpaid to the institution for the program
133 which must be remitted within 60 days after such request. The
134 department may suspend or revoke an institution's eligibility to
135 receive future funds for the program if the department finds that
136 an institution has not complied with this section.

137 (7) (a) A student enrolled in 6 to 8 semester credit hours
138 or the equivalent may receive up to one-half of the maximum
139 award; a student enrolled in 9 to 11 semester credit hours or the
140 equivalent may receive up to three-fourths of the maximum award;

141 and a student enrolled in 12 or more semester credit hours or the
142 equivalent may receive up to the full award.

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

146 (c) A student may use an award for summer-term enrollment
147 if funds are available.

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

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

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

153 (b) Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its
154 equivalent as described in s. 1003.429, s. 1003.43, or s.
155 1003.435 unless:

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

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

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

165 (d) Be accepted by and enroll in a Florida public or
166 independent postsecondary educational institution identified by
167 the Department of Education.

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168 (e) Be enrolled for at least 6 semester credit hours or the
169 equivalent.

170 (f) Not have been found guilty of, or pled nolo contendere
171 to, a felony charge, unless the student has been granted clemency
172 by the Governor and Cabinet sitting as the Executive Office of
173 Clemency.

174 (g) Apply for a scholarship from the program by high school
175 graduation.

176 (9) A student is eligible to accept an initial award for 3
177 years following high school graduation and to accept a renewal
178 award for 7 years following high school graduation. A student who
179 applies for an award by high school graduation and who meets all
180 other eligibility requirements, but who does not accept his or
181 her award, may reapply during subsequent application periods up
182 to 3 years after high school graduation.

183 (10) Eligibility for renewal awards shall be based on
184 continued academic achievement of a cumulative grade point
185 average of 2.75 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent by the student
186 at the eligible institution, continued eligibility for financial
187 assistance pursuant to this section, and participation of the
188 student for at least one summer during the course of the
189 student's postsecondary education in an internship program that
190 is relevant to at least one of the targeted employment areas as
191 defined in this section. A student must work a minimum of 160
192 hours during the summer internship.

193 (11) Employers must pay students in an internship program
194 the federal minimum wage. Employers with whom interns are placed
195 may receive \$500 per student per summer.

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196 Section 2. There is hereby appropriated from the General
 197 Revenue Fund to the Department of Education for fiscal year 2008-
 198 2009 the sum of \$30 million to implement the provisions of s.
 199 1009.705, Florida Statutes, as created by this act.

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