

By Senator Pruitt

28-01173-09

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Florida Bright Futures
3 Scholarship Program; amending s. 1009.53, F.S.;
4 revising provisions relating to the refund by an
5 educational institution to the Department of Education
6 of funds received for courses dropped by students
7 after the end of the drop and add period; providing an
8 exception from the prohibition against the use of
9 scholarship funds for certain courses; requiring a
10 student's written appeal for such exception; amending
11 s. 1009.532, F.S.; revising credit-hour requirements
12 for renewal of a scholarship; providing an effective
13 date.

14
15 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

16
17 Section 1. Paragraph (a) of subsection (5) of section
18 1009.53, Florida Statutes, is amended, and subsection (11) is
19 added to that section, to read:

20 1009.53 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.—

21 (5) The department shall issue awards from the scholarship
22 program annually. Annual awards may be for up to 45 semester
23 credit hours or the equivalent. Before the registration period
24 each semester, the department shall transmit payment for each
25 award to the president or director of the postsecondary
26 education institution, or his or her representative, except that
27 the department may withhold payment if the receiving institution
28 fails to report or to make refunds to the department as required
29 in this section.

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30 (a) Within 30 days after the end of regular registration
31 each semester, the educational institution shall certify to the
32 department the eligibility status of each student who receives
33 an award. After the end of the drop and add period, an
34 institution is not required to reevaluate or revise a student's
35 eligibility status; however, an institution ~~but~~ must make a
36 refund to the department within 30 days after the end of the
37 semester of any funds received for courses dropped by students
38 after the end of the drop and add period unless a student has
39 been granted an exception by the department pursuant to
40 subsection (11) if a student who receives an award disbursement
41 ~~terminates enrollment for any reason during an academic term and~~
42 ~~a refund is permitted by the institution's refund policy.~~

43 (11) Funds for any scholarship within the Florida Bright
44 Futures Scholarship Program may not be used to pay for courses
45 dropped after the end of the drop and add period except as
46 otherwise provided in this subsection. A student who receives an
47 award under this program and subsequently drops one or more
48 courses, or withdraws from all courses, after the end of the
49 drop and add period due to verifiable illness or other emergency
50 may be granted an exception from this prohibition against use of
51 the scholarship funds unless the institution's policy is to
52 refund the cost of the courses. The student must make a written
53 appeal for such an exception to the institution. The appeal must
54 include a description and verification of the circumstances.
55 Verification of illness or other emergency may include, but not
56 be limited to, a physician's statement or the written statement
57 of a parent or institution official. The institution shall
58 recommend exceptions with necessary documentation to the

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59 department. The department may accept or deny the institution's
60 recommendations for exception.

61 Section 2. Paragraph (a) of subsection (1) of section
62 1009.532, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

63 1009.532 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program;
64 student eligibility requirements for renewal awards.-

65 (1) To be eligible to renew a scholarship from any of the
66 three types of scholarships under the Florida Bright Futures
67 Scholarship Program, a student must:

68 (a) Complete at least 24 ~~12~~ semester credit hours or the
69 equivalent in the last academic year in which the student earned
70 a scholarship if the student was enrolled full time, or a
71 prorated number of credit hours as determined by the Department
72 of Education if the student was enrolled less than full time for
73 any part of the academic year.

74 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2009.