

HB 719

2009

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

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

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

19          1009.53 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program.--

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

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

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

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57 recommend exceptions with necessary documentation to the  
58 department. The department may accept or deny the institution's  
59 recommendations for exception.

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

62 1009.532 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program;  
63 student eligibility requirements for renewal awards.--

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

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

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