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594-02557-15

Proposed Committee Substitute by the Committee on Fiscal Policy
(Appropriations Subcommittee on Education)

A bill to be entitled

An act relating to the Bright Futures Scholarship Program; amending s. 1009.531, F.S.; providing that the initial award and renewal period for students who are unable to accept an initial award immediately after completion of high school due to a full-time religious or service obligation begins upon the completion of the religious or service obligation; specifying requirements for an entity that is sponsoring the obligation; requiring verification from the entity for which the student completed such obligation; providing an effective date.

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

Section 1. Paragraph (c) of subsection (2) of section 1009.531, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

1009.531 Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program; student eligibility requirements for initial awards.—

(2)

(c) A student graduating from high school in the 2012-2013 academic year and thereafter is eligible to accept an initial award for 2 years following high school graduation and to accept a renewal award for 5 years following high school graduation. A student who applies for an award by high school graduation and who meets all other eligibility requirements, but who does not accept his or her award, may reapply during subsequent



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28 application periods up to 2 years after high school graduation.
29 For a student who enlists in the United States Armed Forces
30 immediately after completion of high school, the 2-year
31 eligibility period for his or her initial award and the 5-year
32 renewal period shall begin upon the date of separation from
33 active duty. For a student who is receiving a Florida Bright
34 Futures Scholarship award and discontinues his or her education
35 to enlist in the United States Armed Forces, the remainder of
36 his or her 5-year renewal period shall commence upon the date of
37 separation from active duty. For a student who is unable to
38 accept an initial award immediately after completion of high
39 school due to a full-time religious or service obligation
40 lasting at least 18 months, the 2-year eligibility period for
41 his or her initial award and the 5-year renewal period begin
42 upon the completion of his or her religious or service
43 obligation. The organization sponsoring the full-time religious
44 or service obligation must meet the requirements for nonprofit
45 status under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or be a
46 federal government service organization that includes, but is
47 not limited to, the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps programs. The
48 obligation must be documented in writing and verified by the
49 entity for which the student completed the obligation on a
50 standardized form prescribed by the department. If a course of
51 study is not completed after 5 academic years, an exception of 1
52 year to the renewal timeframe may be granted due to a verifiable
53 illness or other documented emergency pursuant to s.
54 1009.40(1)(b)4.

55 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.