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LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate	.	House
Comm: RCS	.	
02/26/2016	.	
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The Committee on Appropriations (Negron) recommended the following:

1           **Senate Amendment to Amendment (927682) (with title**  
2 **amendment)**

3  
4           Between lines 1566 and 1567  
5 insert:

6           Section 13. Section 1009.893, Florida Statutes, is amended  
7 to read:

8           1009.893 Benacquisto Scholarship ~~Florida National Merit~~  
9 ~~Scholar Incentive~~ Program.—

10           (1) As used in this section, the term:



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- 11 (a) "Department" means the Department of Education.
- 12 (b) "Scholarship Incentive program" means the Benacquisto  
13 Scholarship Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive Program.
- 14 (2) The Benacquisto Scholarship Florida National Merit  
15 Scholar Incentive Program is created to reward any Florida high  
16 school graduate who receives recognition as a National Merit  
17 Scholar or National Achievement Scholar and who initially  
18 enrolls in the 2014-2015 academic year or, later, in a  
19 baccalaureate degree program at an eligible Florida public or  
20 independent postsecondary educational institution.
- 21 (3) The department shall administer the scholarship  
22 incentive program according to rules and procedures established  
23 by the State Board of Education. The department shall advertise  
24 the availability of the scholarship incentive program and notify  
25 students, teachers, parents, certified school counselors, and  
26 principals or other relevant school administrators of the  
27 criteria.
- 28 (4) In order to be eligible for an award under the  
29 scholarship incentive program, a student must:
- 30 (a) Be a state resident as determined in s. 1009.40 and  
31 rules of the State Board of Education;
- 32 (b) Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its  
33 equivalent pursuant to s. 1002.3105, s. 1003.4281, s. 1003.4282,  
34 or s. 1003.435 unless:
- 35 1. The student completes a home education program according  
36 to s. 1002.41; or
- 37 2. The student earns a high school diploma from a non-  
38 Florida school while living with a parent who is on military or  
39 public service assignment out of this state;



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40 (c) Be accepted by and enroll in a Florida public or  
41 independent postsecondary educational institution that is  
42 regionally accredited; and

43 (d) Be enrolled full-time in a baccalaureate degree program  
44 at an eligible regionally accredited Florida public or  
45 independent postsecondary educational institution during the  
46 fall academic term following high school graduation.

47 (5) (a) An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar  
48 or National Achievement Scholar and who attends a Florida public  
49 postsecondary educational institution shall receive a  
50 scholarship ~~an incentive~~ award equal to the institutional cost  
51 of attendance minus the sum of the student's Florida Bright  
52 Futures Scholarship and National Merit Scholarship or National  
53 Achievement Scholarship.

54 (b) An eligible student who is a National Merit Scholar or  
55 National Achievement Scholar and who attends a Florida  
56 independent postsecondary educational institution shall receive  
57 a scholarship ~~an incentive~~ award equal to the highest cost of  
58 attendance at a Florida public university, as reported by the  
59 Board of Governors of the State University System, minus the sum  
60 of the student's Florida Bright Futures Scholarship and National  
61 Merit Scholarship or National Achievement Scholarship.

62 (6) (a) To be eligible for a renewal award, a student must  
63 earn all credits for which he or she was enrolled and maintain a  
64 3.0 or higher grade point average.

65 (b) A student may receive the scholarship ~~incentive~~ award  
66 for a maximum of 100 percent of the number of credit hours  
67 required to complete a baccalaureate degree program, or until  
68 completion of a baccalaureate degree program, whichever comes



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69 first.

70 (7) The department shall annually issue awards from the  
71 scholarship ~~incentive~~ program. Before the registration period  
72 each semester, the department shall transmit payment for each  
73 award to the president or director of the postsecondary  
74 educational institution, or his or her representative, except  
75 that the department may withhold payment if the receiving  
76 institution fails to report or to make refunds to the department  
77 as required in this section.

78 (a) Each institution shall certify to the department the  
79 eligibility status of each student to receive a disbursement  
80 within 30 days before the end of its regular registration  
81 period, inclusive of a drop and add period. An institution is  
82 not required to reevaluate the student eligibility after the end  
83 of the drop and add period.

84 (b) An institution that receives funds from the scholarship  
85 ~~incentive~~ program must certify to the department the amount of  
86 funds disbursed to each student and remit to the department any  
87 undisbursed advances within 60 days after the end of regular  
88 registration.

89 (c) If funds appropriated are not adequate to provide the  
90 maximum allowable award to each eligible student, awards must be  
91 prorated using the same percentage reduction.

92 (8) Funds from any award within the scholarship ~~incentive~~  
93 program may not be used to pay for remedial coursework or  
94 developmental education.

95 (9) A student may use an award for a summer term if funds  
96 are available and appropriated by the Legislature.

97 (10) The department shall allocate funds to the appropriate



98 institutions and collect and maintain data regarding the  
99 scholarship incentive program within the student financial  
100 assistance database as specified in s. 1009.94.

101 (11) Section 1009.40(4) does not apply to awards issued  
102 under this section.

103 (12) A student who receives an award under the scholarship  
104 program shall be known as a Benacquisto Scholar.

105 (13) All eligible Florida public or independent  
106 postsecondary educational institutions are encouraged to become,  
107 and all eligible state universities shall become, college  
108 sponsors of the National Merit Scholarship Program.

109 (14) ~~(12)~~ The State Board of Education shall adopt rules  
110 necessary to administer this section.

111  
112 ===== T I T L E A M E N D M E N T =====

113 And the title is amended as follows:

114 Delete line 2382

115 and insert:

116 the evidence; amending s. 1009.893, F.S.; changing the  
117 name of the "Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive  
118 Program" to the "Benacquisto Scholarship Program";  
119 providing that a student who receives a scholarship  
120 award under the program will be referred to as a  
121 Benacquisto Scholar; encouraging all eligible Florida  
122 public or independent postsecondary educational  
123 institutions, and requiring all eligible state  
124 universities, to become college sponsors of the  
125 National Merit Scholarship Program; amending s.  
126 1011.61, F.S.; revising the