



538118

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Senate

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House

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Senator Gaetz moved the following:

**Senate Amendment (with title amendment)**

Between lines 576 and 577

insert:

Section 9. Section 1009.893, Florida Statutes, is amended to read:

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

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

(a) "Department" means the Department of Education.

(b) "Scholarship ~~Incentive~~ program" means the Benacquisto



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12 Scholarship ~~Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive~~ Program.

13       (2) The Benacquisto Scholarship ~~Florida National Merit~~  
14 ~~Scholar Incentive~~ Program is created to reward any Florida high  
15 school graduate who receives recognition as a National Merit  
16 Scholar or National Achievement Scholar and who initially  
17 enrolls in the 2014-2015 academic year or, later, in a  
18 baccalaureate degree program at an eligible Florida public or  
19 independent postsecondary educational institution.

20       (3) The department shall administer the scholarship  
21 ~~incentive~~ program according to rules and procedures established  
22 by the State Board of Education. The department shall advertise  
23 the availability of the scholarship ~~incentive~~ program and notify  
24 students, teachers, parents, certified school counselors, and  
25 principals or other relevant school administrators of the  
26 criteria.

27       (4) In order to be eligible for an award under the  
28 scholarship ~~incentive~~ program, a student must:

29       (a) Be a state resident as determined in s. 1009.40 and  
30 rules of the State Board of Education;

31       (b) Earn a standard Florida high school diploma or its  
32 equivalent pursuant to s. 1002.3105, s. 1003.4281, s. 1003.4282,  
33 or s. 1003.435 unless:

34       1. The student completes a home education program according  
35 to s. 1002.41; or

36       2. The student earns a high school diploma from a non-  
37 Florida school while living with a parent who is on military or  
38 public service assignment out of this state;

39       (c) Be accepted by and enroll in a Florida public or  
40 independent postsecondary educational institution that is



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41 regionally accredited; and

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

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

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

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

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

69 (7) The department shall annually issue awards from the



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

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

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

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

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

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

96 (10) The department shall allocate funds to the appropriate  
97 institutions and collect and maintain data regarding the  
98 scholarship ~~incentive~~ program within the student financial



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99 assistance database as specified in s. 1009.94.

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

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

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

108 (14)~~(12)~~ The State Board of Education shall adopt rules  
109 necessary to administer this section.

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

112 And the title is amended as follows:

113 Delete line 54

114 and insert:

115 requirement; amending s. 1009.893, F.S.; changing the  
116 name of the "Florida National Merit Scholar Incentive  
117 Program" to the "Benacquisto Scholarship Program";  
118 providing that a student who receives a scholarship  
119 award under the program will be referred to as a  
120 Benacquisto Scholar; encouraging all eligible Florida  
121 public or independent postsecondary educational  
122 institutions, and requiring all eligible state  
123 universities, to become college sponsors of the  
124 National Merit Scholarship Program; amending s.  
125 1011.62, F.S.; creating a