

By Senator Rodriguez

37-00396-20

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the Sunshine Scholarship Program;
3 creating s. 1009.895, F.S.; establishing the Sunshine
4 Scholarship Program; requiring the Department of
5 Education to administer the program; providing the
6 purpose of the program; defining the term "eligible
7 postsecondary institution"; requiring certain
8 financial aid to be credited to a student's tuition
9 and fees before the award of a Sunshine Scholarship;
10 specifying student eligibility requirements; defining
11 the term "full-time student"; requiring a student to
12 repay the scholarship amount under certain
13 circumstances; providing that the program applies only
14 to a student's tuition and fees; providing for
15 funding; providing for rulemaking; providing an
16 effective date.

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

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20 Section 1. Section 1009.895, Florida Statutes, is created
21 to read:

22 1009.895 Sunshine Scholarship Program.—

23 (1) There is established the Sunshine Scholarship Program
24 to be administered by the Department of Education pursuant to
25 this section and rules of the State Board of Education. The
26 Sunshine Scholarship Program shall provide funding for 100
27 percent of tuition and fees for Florida residents pursuing an
28 associate degree or career certificate from an eligible
29 postsecondary institution. For purposes of this section, the

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30 term "eligible postsecondary institution" means a Florida
31 College System institution, a career center operated by a school
32 district, or a charter technical career center. Financial aid
33 received from the Pell Grant, the Florida Public Student
34 Assistance Grant Program, and the Florida Bright Futures
35 Scholarship Program shall be credited first to the student's
36 tuition and fees before the award of a scholarship under this
37 section.

38 (2) To be eligible to receive a scholarship pursuant to
39 this section, a student must:

40 (a) Be a resident for tuition purposes, as defined in s.
41 1009.21.

42 (b) Meet the general requirements for student eligibility
43 as provided in s. 1009.40, except as otherwise provided in this
44 section.

45 (c) Have a total annual household income of up to:

46 1. Two hundred fifty percent of the federal poverty
47 threshold to receive a 100 percent scholarship;

48 2. Three hundred twenty-five percent of the federal poverty
49 threshold to receive a 75 percent scholarship;

50 3. Four hundred percent of the federal poverty threshold to
51 receive a 50 percent scholarship; or

52 4. Five hundred percent of the federal poverty threshold to
53 receive a 25 percent scholarship.

54 (d) Complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid
55 for each academic year in which the scholarship is sought.

56 (e) Be accepted by and enroll in an eligible postsecondary
57 institution.

58 (f) Maintain continuous enrollment as a full-time student

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59 while receiving the scholarship. For purposes of this section,
60 the term "full-time student" means a student enrolled in a
61 minimum of 12 semester hours or the clock-hour equivalent.

62 (3) Upon completion of his or her program of study, or upon
63 disenrollment from an eligible postsecondary institution, the
64 student must reside and work within this state for the same
65 period of time he or she received funds from the Sunshine
66 Scholarship Program. If the student does not reside and work
67 within this state for the specified period, the student must
68 repay the total scholarship amount awarded, plus an annual
69 interest rate equal to the federal student loan interest rate in
70 effect when the student entered the scholarship program. The
71 requirements of this subsection do not apply:

72 (a) When a student enlists in the United States Armed
73 Forces; or

74 (b) While a student is continuously enrolled in a
75 baccalaureate degree program or higher at a Florida
76 postsecondary institution. Once the student graduates or
77 disenrolls from a Florida postsecondary institution, the
78 requirements of this subsection apply.

79 (4) To remain eligible for the program, a student must
80 maintain the equivalent of a cumulative grade point average of
81 2.5 on a 4.0 scale while enrolled at an eligible postsecondary
82 institution.

83 (5) The Sunshine Scholarship Program applies only to
84 tuition and fees. Each student is responsible for additional
85 user fees, textbooks, and other college-related expenses.

86 (6) Funding for the program shall be as provided in the
87 General Appropriations Act.

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88 (7) The State Board of Education may adopt rules to
89 implement this section.

90 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2020.