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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2017

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

Introduced By: Representatives Marshall, Serpa, Kennedy, O`Grady, and Casey

Date Introduced: March 01, 2017

Referred To: House Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Title 16 of the General Laws entitled "EDUCATION" is hereby amended
2 by adding thereto the following chapter:

3 CHAPTER 107

4 RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP ACT

5 **16-107-1. Short title.**

6 This chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Rhode Island Promise Scholarship
7 Act."

8 **16-107-2. Legislative findings and purpose.**

9 (a) The general assembly finds and declares that:

10 (1) Education is critical for the state's young people to achieve their dreams and develop
11 their talents;

12 (2) The state's economic success depends on a highly educated and skilled workforce;
13 and

14 (3) The state's future prosperity depends upon its ability to make educational
15 opportunities beyond high school available for all students as part of a free public education.

16 (b) In order to address the findings set forth in subsection (a) of this section, the purposes
17 of this chapter are to increase:

18 (1) The number of students enrolled at the universities, colleges and other postsecondary
19 institutions in the state; and

1 (2) The number of students who complete their degree on time at these institutions.

2 **16-107-3. Establishment of scholarship program.**

3 Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2017, it is hereby established the
4 Rhode Island promise scholarship program. Initial funding for this is to be seeded by the general
5 assembly and sustained by partnerships with public and private entities that engage in a
6 memorandum of understanding that internships will be provided for the students receiving
7 education or field of training, including the vocational trade schools, in exchange for fees that
8 shall be paid into the program for intern hours by participating entities. Funds shall be placed into
9 a restricted receipt account at each eligible postsecondary institution to implement the purposes of
10 this chapter. In addition to appropriation by the general assembly, charitable donations may be
11 accepted into the scholarship program. Students shall be required to enter into a memorandum of
12 understanding that their internships are a requirement of free tuition. Municipalities, state
13 agencies, higher educational facilities, open & closed shop trades, nonprofits, as well as private
14 industry shall be eligible to enter into this proposed educational program for interns/apprentices.

15 **16-107-4. Definitions.**

16 When used in this chapter, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

17 (1) "Eligible postsecondary institution" means any of the universities, colleges and other
18 postsecondary institutions in the state.

19 (2) "FAFSA" means the Free Application for Federal Student Aid form.

20 (3) "Mandatory fees and tuition" means the costs that every student is required to pay in
21 order to enroll in classes at the eligible postsecondary institutions, and does not include room and
22 board, textbooks, meal plans or travel.

23 (4) "On track to graduate on time" means the standards determined by the applicable
24 eligible postsecondary institution in establishing the expectation of a student to graduate with:

25 (i) An associate's degree within two (2) years of enrollment; and

26 (ii) A bachelor's degree within four (4) years of enrollment.

27 (5) "Scholarship program" means the Rhode Island promise scholarship program that is
28 established pursuant to §16-107-3.

29 (6) "State" means the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations.

30 **16-107-5. Administration of scholarship program.**

31 (a) The financial aid office in conjunction with the office of enrollment, or their
32 respective equivalent offices, at the applicable eligible postsecondary institution, under the
33 supervision of the council on postsecondary education, shall administer the scholarship program
34 for state residents seeking associate and bachelor degrees at eligible postsecondary institutions

1 who meet the eligibility requirements in this chapter.

2 (b) An award of the scholarship program shall cover the cost of two (2) years of tuition
3 and mandatory fees at the eligible postsecondary institution less federal and all other financial aid
4 monies available to the recipient-student.

5 (c) The scholarship program limits one award per student.

6 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

7 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at an eligible postsecondary institution in the
8 fall of 2017, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

9 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by
10 the council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated or otherwise
11 modified from time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must have satisfied
12 the high school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching nineteen (19) years of
13 age; provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a
14 high school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the
15 condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its
16 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the council on elementary
17 and secondary education;

18 (2)(i) In the case of a recipient-student with regard to the Community College of Rhode
19 Island, must be admitted to, and must enroll to, attend the institution on a full-time basis by the
20 fall immediately following high school graduation or receipt of the high school equivalency
21 diploma; or

22 (ii) In the case of a recipient-student with regard to students enrolled at the other
23 universities, colleges and other postsecondary institutions in the state, must be a currently
24 enrolled full-time student who has declared a major and accumulated a minimum of sixty (60)
25 credit hours towards a bachelor's degree at the student's current institution;

26 (iii) Must complete the FAFSA by the deadline prescribed by the applicable eligible
27 postsecondary institution for each academic year in which the student seeks to receive funding
28 under the scholarship program;

29 (iv) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

30 (v) Must maintain a minimum of two (2.0) grade point average at the applicable eligible
31 postsecondary institution;

32 (vi) Must remain on track to graduate on time at the applicable eligible postsecondary
33 institution; and

34 (vii) Must not have already received an award under the scholarship program.

1 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under §§16-107-6(a) ("specified
2 conditions"):

3 (1) In the case of a student who has an approved medical or personal leave of absence
4 from an eligible postsecondary institution and is unable to satisfy one or more specified
5 conditions because of the student's medical or personal circumstances, the student may continue
6 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon resuming the student's education at the
7 eligible postsecondary institution so long as the student continues to meet all other applicable
8 eligibility requirements; and

9 (2) In the case of a student who is a member of the national guard or a member of a
10 reserve unit of a branch of the United State military and is unable to satisfy one or more specified
11 conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or will be
12 participating in a deployment of the student's guard or reserve unit, the student may continue to
13 receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student's basic or special
14 military training or deployment.

15 **16-107-7. Rules and procedures.**

16 The council on postsecondary education is hereby authorized to promulgate rules and
17 establish appeal procedures for the award, denial or revocation of funding under the scholarship
18 program, and to otherwise effectuate the purposes of this chapter. The rules shall be promulgated
19 in accordance with §16-59-4.

20 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- RHODE ISLAND PROMISE SCHOLARSHIP

1 This act would establish a postsecondary education scholarship program to be funded in
2 part by the state and in partnership with public and private entities that engage in a memorandum
3 of understanding that internships would be provided for students receiving the education or field
4 of training. This would include the vocational trade schools. Students would be required to enter
5 into a memorandum of understanding that their internships are a requirement of free tuition.
6 Municipalities, state agencies, higher educational facilities, open and closed shop trades, non-
7 profits, as well as private industry would be able to enter into this proposed educational program
8 for interns/apprentices. Funding for this program will be a mixture of state funds and fees paid
9 into the program for intern hours by participating entities.

10 This act would take effect upon passage.

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