

2021 -- S 0079

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION

Introduced By: Senators Ruggerio, McCaffrey, Goodwin, Gallo, Cano, Pearson,
Sosnowski, Euer, DiPalma, and Ciccone

Date Introduced: January 26, 2021

Referred To: Senate Education

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 16-107-3 and 16-107-6 of the General Laws in Chapter 16-107
2 entitled "Rhode Island Promise Scholarship" are hereby amended to read as follows:

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

4 Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2017, it is hereby established the Rhode
5 Island promise scholarship program ~~that will end with the high school graduating class of 2021.~~
6 The general assembly shall annually appropriate the funds necessary to implement the purposes of
7 this chapter. Additional funds beyond the scholarships may be appropriated to support and advance
8 the Rhode Island promise scholarship program. In addition to appropriation by the general
9 assembly, charitable donations may be accepted into the scholarship program.

10 **16-107-6. Eligibility for scholarship.**

11 (a) Beginning with the students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in
12 the fall of 2017 ~~and ending with students who enroll at the community college of Rhode Island in~~
13 ~~the fall of 2021~~, to be considered for the scholarship, a student:

14 (1) Must qualify for in-state tuition and fees pursuant to the residency policy adopted by
15 the council on postsecondary education, as amended, supplemented, restated, or otherwise modified
16 from time to time ("residency policy"); provided, that, the student must have satisfied the high
17 school graduation/equivalency diploma condition prior to reaching nineteen (19) years of age;
18 provided, further, that in addition to the option of meeting the requirement by receiving a high
19 school equivalency diploma as described in the residency policy, the student can satisfy the

1 condition by receiving other certificates or documents of equivalent nature from the state or its
2 municipalities as recognized by applicable regulations promulgated by the council on elementary
3 and secondary education;

4 (2) Must be admitted to, and must enroll and attend the community college of Rhode Island
5 on a full-time basis by the semester immediately following high school graduation or the semester
6 immediately following receipt of a high school equivalency diploma;

7 (3) Must complete the FAFSA and any required FAFSA verification by the deadline
8 prescribed by the community college of Rhode Island for each year in which the student seeks to
9 receive funding under the scholarship program;

10 (4) Must continue to be enrolled on a full-time basis;

11 (5) Must maintain an average annual cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 2.5 or
12 greater, as determined by the community college of Rhode Island;

13 (6) Must remain on track to graduate on time as determined by the community college of
14 Rhode Island;

15 (7) Must not have already received an award under this scholarship program; and

16 (8) Must commit to live, work, or continue their education in Rhode Island after graduation.

17 The community college of Rhode Island shall develop a policy that will secure this
18 commitment from recipient students.

19 (b) Notwithstanding the eligibility requirements under subsection (a) of this section
20 ("specified conditions"):

21 (i) In the case of a recipient student who has an approved medical or personal leave of
22 absence or is unable to satisfy one or more specified conditions because of the student's medical or
23 personal circumstances, the student may continue to receive an award under the scholarship
24 program upon resuming the student's education so long as the student continues to meet all other
25 applicable eligibility requirements; and

26 (ii) In the case of a recipient student who is a member of the national guard or a member
27 of a reserve unit of a branch of the United States military and is unable to satisfy one or more
28 specified conditions because the student is or will be in basic or special military training, or is or
29 will be participating in a deployment of the student's guard or reserve unit, the student may continue
30 to receive an award under the scholarship program upon completion of the student's basic or special
31 military training or deployment.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would remove the requirement that the scholarship program cease with the
- 2 enrollment of the high school graduating class of 2021 at the community college of Rhode Island.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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