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SENATE BILL NO. 700

Offered January 24, 2000

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 22.1-212.2:1.01, relating to the Early Childhood Education Scholarship Loan Program.

Patrons—Ticer, Byrne, Couric, Edwards, Howell, Lambert, Marye, Miller, Y.B., Puller and Whipple;
Delegates: Almand, Baskerville, Darner, Hull, Moran, Van Landingham and Watts

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 22.1-212.2:1.01 as follows:

§ 22.1-212.2:1.01. Early Childhood Education Scholarship Loan Program established; purpose; Board of Education to administer Program; eligibility; repayment of scholarship required.

A. With such funds as may be appropriated and from such gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received for this purpose, there is hereby established the Early Childhood Education Scholarship Loan Program, hereafter referred to as the "Program," to increase the number of students pursuing careers in pre-elementary, early childhood, or kindergarten education.

The Program shall be administered by the Board of Education, which shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of the Program. The Board shall consult with the State Council of Higher Education in the development and implementation of the Program.

B. The Program shall consist of scholarships awarded annually to undergraduate students attending nonprofit two- or four-year institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth whose primary purpose is to provide collegiate or graduate education and not to provide religious training or theological education, who: (i) are enrolled full time in an approved bachelor or associate degree program of pre-elementary, early childhood, or kindergarten education and (ii) have and maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent.

C. Before any teaching scholarship loan is awarded pursuant to this section, the recipient shall sign a promissory note under which he agrees to pursue an approved teacher education program full time at such nonprofit two- or four-year institution of higher education until his graduation and to repay such scholarship loan obligation through employment in the Commonwealth as provided in this subsection.

Recipients graduating from four-year institutions of higher education may fulfill the scholarship loan obligation by serving in a teaching position in pre-elementary, early childhood, or kindergarten education in the public schools of the Commonwealth, as determined by the Board of Education, for two years. Recipients graduating with associate degrees from two-year institutions may fulfill the scholarship loan obligation by serving in an employment position in pre-elementary, early childhood, or kindergarten education in the Commonwealth, as prescribed by the Board of Education, in consultation with the Child Day-Care Council, for two years.

The Board of Education may recover the total amount of funds awarded as a scholarship or the appropriate proportion thereof, including any accrued interest, if the recipient fails to honor the teaching or employment obligation.

D. There is hereby created in the Department of the Treasury a special nonreverting fund known as the Early Childhood Education Scholarship Loan Fund, hereafter referred to as the "Fund." The Fund shall be established on the books of the Comptroller, and any moneys remaining in the Fund at the end of the biennium shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. The Fund shall consist of such moneys as may be appropriated for the Early Childhood Education Scholarship Loan Program and such gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the Board of Education.

Interest earned on such moneys shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely to award scholarships pursuant to the Program as provided in this section. Disbursements from the Fund for such scholarships shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants issued by the Comptroller upon written request of the President of the Board of Education.

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