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HOUSE BILL NO. 2805

Offered January 19, 2001

A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 23 a chapter numbered 4.4:5, consisting of sections numbered 23-38.53:30 through 23-38.53:33, relating to the Virginia Hope Scholarship Program and Fund.

Patrons—Jones, J.C., Jones, D.C. and McEachin

Referred to Committee on Education

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 23 a chapter numbered 4.4:5, consisting of sections numbered 23-38.53:30 through 23-38.53:33, as follows:

CHAPTER 4.4:5.**VIRGINIA HOPE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM.**

§ 23-38.53:30. *Virginia Hope Scholarship Program created; purpose; State Council of Higher Education to administer; promulgation of regulations.*

A. With such funds as may be appropriated for this purpose and any gifts, donations, grants, bequests, and other funds that may be received on behalf of the Program by the Board of Education, there is hereby established the Virginia Hope Scholarship Program, hereinafter referred to as the "Program," for the purpose of closing the academic achievement gap between minority and non-minority students, promoting academic achievement among high school students of under-represented groups in higher education who desire to attend college, and to provide financial assistance to such students, low-income students, and first-generation college students to enable them to obtain an undergraduate or first graduate or professional degree.

B. The Program shall consist of scholarships awarded on the basis of need annually to eligible students who are accepted for admission or enrolled in accredited public or private four-year institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth, and who are enrolled full time in a degree-granting program at a public or private four-year institution of higher education in Virginia, as an undergraduate, a graduate, or professional school student. However, students pursuing a course of religious training or theological education or students enrolled in any institution whose primary purpose is to provide religious training or theological education shall not be eligible for such scholarships. First-time entering freshmen shall have maintained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent in high school. The Program shall be administered by the State Council of Higher Education, which shall promulgate such regulations as may be necessary for the implementation of the Program. Such regulations shall ensure that each recipient demonstrates satisfactory progress before such scholarships may be renewed and shall require repayment of such scholarships, or part thereof, if a recipient should leave or fail to attend full time the institution for other than meritorious reasons during the academic year.

The amount of the Virginia Hope Scholarship awarded eligible students shall be determined annually by the State Council of Higher Education. Eligibility for such awards shall be determined according to the Congressional methodology for determining financial need and eligibility for financial aid.

§ 23-38.53:31. *Eligible students; criteria for awarding scholarships; renewals.*

A. To be eligible to receive scholarships, students shall (i) be domiciled residents of Virginia as defined by § 23-7.4; (ii) be accepted for admission or enrolled in any public or private four-year institution of higher education in Virginia, in accordance with subsection B of § 23-38.53:30; (iii) have graduated from a high school in the Commonwealth, and have completed the requirements for the Advanced Diploma; (iv) have determined to earn an undergraduate or graduate degree in mathematics, the physical or biological sciences, computer technology, foreign language, or engineering, or the first professional degree in medicine, law, dentistry, or nursing; or (v) have determined to earn an undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree in any discipline in which minority persons are underrepresented.

B. All scholarships shall be awarded for one year, but may be renewed annually on the same basis as originally granted by the State Council of Higher Education for no more than three subsequent years of study for students enrolled in four-year undergraduate programs and for no more than four years for students enrolled in recognized five-year undergraduate programs; for no more than three years for students enrolled in a graduate program; or for no more than four years for a student enrolled in a degree-granting program for the first professional degree if the recipient:

1. Maintains at least a 3.0 grade point average on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent;

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59 2. *Demonstrates continued financial need;*

60 3. *Makes satisfactory academic progress toward a degree, earning not less than the minimum*
61 *number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic period during enrollment at*
62 *a public institution of higher education in Virginia; and*

63 4. *Maintains continuous enrollment for not less than two semesters or three quarters in each*
64 *successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the State Council of Higher*
65 *Education.*

66 § 23-38.53:32. *Amount of scholarships; phasing in program; terms and conditions; use of*
67 *scholarships.*

68 A. *No scholarship awarded under this Program shall exceed \$4,000 per year. The maximum amount*
69 *which may be received by one recipient shall be \$16,000 for four years of undergraduate study; \$*
70 *20,000 for a student enrolled in a recognized five-year undergraduate program; \$12,000 for a student*
71 *enrolled in a graduate program; and \$16,000 for a student enrolled in a degree-granting program for*
72 *the first professional degree.*

73 B. *The Virginia Hope Scholarship Program shall be phased in by the State Council of Higher*
74 *Education over a four-year period, the first awards to be made after July 1, 2001, with the amounts and*
75 *maximum number of scholarships awarded in any year of its operation to be determined by the*
76 *appropriations made available for this Program by the General Assembly.*

77 C. *The full amount of each scholarship awarded to each recipient shall be used only for payment of*
78 *charges for tuition, fees, room, board, books, or other educational expenses as approved by the State*
79 *Council of Higher Education.*

80 § 23-38.53:33. *Virginia Hope Scholarship Fund created.*

81 *There is hereby created in the Department of the Treasury a special nonreverting fund known as the*
82 *Virginia Hope Scholarship Fund, hereinafter referred to as the "Fund." The Fund shall be established*
83 *on the books of the Comptroller, and any moneys remaining in the Fund at the end of the biennium*
84 *shall not revert to the general fund but shall remain in the Fund. The Fund shall consist of such moneys*
85 *as may be appropriated for the Virginia Hope Scholarship Program and such gifts, donations, grants,*
86 *bequests, and other funds as may be received on its behalf by the State Council of Higher Education.*
87 *The Fund shall be used solely to fund the Virginia Hope Scholarship Program. Interest earned on such*
88 *moneys shall remain in the Fund and be credited to it. Moneys in the Fund shall be used solely to*
89 *award scholarships pursuant to the Virginia Hope Scholarship Program, as provided in § 23-38.53:31.*
90 *Disbursements from the Fund for such scholarships shall be made by the State Treasurer on warrants*
91 *issued by the Comptroller upon written request of the Chairman of the State Council of Higher*
92 *Education.*