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HOUSE BILL NO. 1022

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 13, 2016

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23-38.53:6 of the Code of Virginia, relating to the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program; eligibility; use of funds.

Patron—Sickles

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 23-38.53:6 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 23-38.53:6. Eligible students; criteria for awarding grants; renewals.**

A. Only students who (i) are domiciled residents of Virginia as defined by § 23-7.4 and who are graduates of a high school in the Commonwealth with a cumulative secondary school grade point average of at least 2.5 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent, or (ii) are dependent children of active duty military personnel residing outside the Commonwealth pursuant to military orders and claiming Virginia on their State of Legal Residence Certificate and satisfying the domicile requirements for such active duty military personnel pursuant to subsection B of § 23-7.4, and who are graduates of a high school inside or outside the Commonwealth with a cumulative secondary school grade point average of at least 2.5 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent, and who (iii) are accepted for *full-time* enrollment as ~~dependent students~~ in any public institution of higher education in Virginia, and (iv) are not receiving state discretionary aid and demonstrate financial need as defined by the State Council of Higher Education shall be eligible to receive such awards.

B. The amount of the Guaranteed Assistance Program grant awarded 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.

C. All grants shall be awarded for one year; ~~but~~ *and* may be renewed annually for ~~no more than three subsequent years of study~~ if the recipient:

1. Maintains at least a 2.0 grade point average on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent;
2. *Successfully completes a minimum of 30 credit hours in the immediate preceding award year, unless granted an exception for cause pursuant to Council regulations;*
3. Demonstrates continued financial need;
- ~~3- 4. Makes satisfactory academic progress toward a degree; earning not less than the minimum number of hours of credit required for full-time standing in each academic period during enrollment at a public institution of higher education in Virginia; and~~
5. *Enrolls full time;*
- ~~4. 6. Maintains continuous full-time enrollment for not less than two semesters or three quarters in each successive academic year, unless granted an exception for cause by the State pursuant to Council of Higher Education regulations; and~~
7. *Is enrolled in (i) a four-year public institution of higher education and has not met the credit hour threshold as defined in subsection F of § 23-7.4 or (ii) a two-year public institution of higher education and has received a grant under the Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program for no more than two and a half years.*

D. Public institutions of higher education may use Guaranteed Assistance Program funds to provide enhanced grants to students who are enrolled in at least 15 credit hours per term.

2. That the provisions of this act shall become effective beginning with first-time entering freshman class of the fall 2017 academic year.

INTRODUCED

HB1022