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HOUSE BILL NO. 2427

Offered January 19, 2017

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-638 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Virginia Guaranteed Assistance Program; grants.

Patrons—Cox, Anderson, Landes, Minchew, O'Bannon and Pillion

Referred to Committee on Appropriations

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 23.1-638 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 23.1-638. Eligibility; amount of grants; renewals.

A. Only students who (i) are accepted for enrollment as dependent students at a public institution of higher education; (ii) are not receiving a Virginia Commonwealth Award; (iii) demonstrate financial need as determined by the Council according to the congressional methodology for determining financial need and eligibility for financial aid; and (iv) are either (a) Virginia students who graduated from a high school in the Commonwealth with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent or (b) are dependent children of active duty military personnel residing outside the Commonwealth pursuant to military orders, claiming Virginia on their State of Legal Residence Certificate, and satisfying the domicile requirements for such active duty military personnel pursuant to § 23.1-504 and who graduated from a high school within or outside the Commonwealth with a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.5 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent are eligible to receive such grants.

B. Each eligible student shall receive such a grant from the institution's appropriations for undergraduate student financial assistance before grants are awarded to students with equivalent remaining need.

C. Each eligible student shall receive a grant in an amount greater than other grants awarded to students with equivalent remaining need.

D. Beginning with first-time students enrolled in the fall semester in 2018, each eligible student shall receive a grant in an amount greater than the grant of each eligible student with equivalent remaining need in the next-lowest class level.

E. The amount of each grant shall vary according to each student's remaining need and the total of tuition, fees, and other necessary charges, including books. The actual amount of each grant shall be determined by the proportionate award schedule adopted by each institution.

F. All grants shall be awarded for one award year and may be renewed annually for no more than three subsequent award years, and students shall not receive subsequent grants until they have satisfied the requirements to move to the next class level. Each recipient may receive a maximum of one year of support per class level for a maximum total of four years of support at a baccalaureate public institution of higher education and a maximum total of two years of support at an associate-degree-granting public institution of higher education, provided that in no case shall a recipient receive more than a combined total of four years of support, if the recipient:

1. Maintains a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0 on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent;
2. Demonstrates continued financial need;
3. 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; and
4. Maintains continuous enrollment for not less than two semesters or three quarters in each successive award year unless the Council grants the recipient an exception for cause.

INTRODUCED

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