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SENATE BILL NO. 838

Offered January 11, 2017

Prefiled November 15, 2016

A BILL to direct the Department of Social Services to establish the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Scholarship Pilot Program.

Patrons—Stanley, Ebbin, Favola and McPike; Delegate: Kory

Referred to Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. § 1. That the Virginia Department of Social Services (the Department) shall establish a three-year pilot program, to be referred to as the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Scholarship Pilot Program (the Program), beginning in 2017 for the purpose of providing access to postsecondary educational opportunities to students living in poverty. The Program shall provide to selected students who meet the TANF eligibility requirements prepaid scholarships to select community colleges in the Virginia Community College System. Program funds shall be used to make payments for the costs of tuition and books in advance of a student's enrollment in a participating community college. No student receiving Program funds shall be charged any fees in excess of the costs of tuition and books or the terms delineated in the advance payment contract.

§ 2. The Program shall be funded by the unexpended balance in federal TANF block grant funds. Such funds shall be used to provide to 50 to 75 students participating in the program a maximum of \$2,000 each per year. Such funds may be paid directly to participating community colleges or directed to Virginia programs authorized pursuant to § 529 of the Internal Revenue Code.

§ 3. The Program shall be implemented at two or more community colleges, at least one of which shall be located in an urban area and at least one of which shall be located in a rural area. Community colleges participating or applying to participate in the Program shall submit information outlining educational and vocational programs offered at the applying or participating community college that have been shown, through surveys or other assessments, to lead to self-sufficiency for enrolled students, including programs in which students receive a degree or qualifications necessary to obtain licensure or certification in a specific field of employment.

§ 4. The Department shall administer and establish regulations to govern the Program, including regulations that set forth guidelines for selecting students to participate in the Program. The Department shall monitor, record, and analyze the outcomes of all students participating in the Program.

§ 5. The Commissioner of Social Services shall report to the Governor and the General Assembly no later than December 1 of each year of the Program. Such report shall include (i) the number of eligible students who applied to participate in the Program; (ii) the number of students selected to participate in the Program; (iii) the criteria for selection and other nonidentifying statistical information about students selected to participate in the Program; (iv) student outcome analysis and evaluation; (v) methods used to assess student outcomes; (vi) information regarding the community colleges selected to participate in the Program and the areas in which such community colleges are located; (vii) actual expenditures for the Program; and (viii) any other information deemed necessary by the Commissioner to evaluate the effectiveness of the Program.

INTRODUCED

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