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HOUSE BILL NO. 700

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE
(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Education and Health
on February 22, 2024)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Tata)

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-601 of the Code of Virginia, relating to certain individuals in foster care, in the custody of the Department of Social Services, or considered a special needs adoption; parameters of higher education grants; point of contact for support and guidance.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 23.1-601 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 23.1-601. Public institutions of higher education; grants for tuition, room and board, and fees for certain individuals; point of contact.

A. Each comprehensive community college shall and any other associate-degree-granting public institution of higher education or baccalaureate public institution of higher education may shall provide a grant for the payment of tuition and fees, except fees established for the purpose of paying for course materials such as laboratory fees, and, if such institution is a baccalaureate public institution of higher education, room and board, for any Virginia student who:

1. a. Has received a high school diploma or has passed a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education and was in foster care or in the custody of the Department of Social Services or is was considered a special needs adoption at the any time such diploma or certificate was awarded after he turned 14; or

b. Was in foster care when he turned 18 and subsequently received a high school diploma or passed a high school equivalency examination approved by the Board of Education;

2. Is enrolled or has been accepted for enrollment as a full-time or part-time student, taking a minimum of six credit hours per semester, in a degree or certificate program of at least one academic year in length or in a noncredit workforce credential program in a comprehensive community college;

3. Has not been enrolled in postsecondary education as a full-time student for more than five years or does not have a bachelor's degree;

4. Maintains the required grade point average established by the governing board of the institution at which he is enrolled;

5. Has submitted complete applications for federal student financial aid programs for which he may be eligible;

6. Demonstrates financial need; and

7. Meets any additional financial need requirements established by the governing board of the institution at which he is enrolled for the purposes of such grant.

B. The State Board and the Council, in consultation with the Department of Social Services, shall establish regulations governing such grants. The regulations shall include provisions addressing renewals of grants, financial need, the calculation of grant amounts after consideration of any additional financial resources or aid the student holds, the minimum grade point average required to retain such grant, and procedures for the repayment of tuition and fees for failure to meet the requirements imposed by this section.

C. Each public institution of higher education shall identify at least one employee of the institution to serve as a point of contact for each enrolled student who was in foster care or in the custody of the Department of Social Services or was considered a special needs adoption in order to provide such student with support and guidance, including support and guidance relating to financial aid and any associated applications or other required paperwork.