

ENROLLED SENATE
BILL NO. 196

By: Williams of the Senate

and

Braddock and Davis of the
House

An Act relating to higher education; amending 70 O.S. 1991, Sections 626.4 and 626.7, which relate to the Oklahoma Higher Education Tuition Aid Act; modifying eligibility requirements; making certain references gender neutral; removing limit on certain award; authorizing Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to set limits on certain award; authorizing Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to set award amounts based on need analysis system; deleting certain award amounts; deleting certain definition; allowing certain students to maintain eligibility under current criteria; creating certain task force; stating purpose; stating membership composition; requiring study of certain items; requiring certain report; providing for travel reimbursement and staffing; providing for noncodification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 1991, Section 626.4, is amended to read as follows:

Section 626.4 State tuition aid grants shall be awarded to all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number to be awarded in any year other than the amount of appropriations available therefor. The institution involved may appropriately schedule work to permit recipients to earn the amount of said tuition grants.

Definitions of full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students shall be established by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. ~~Provided, no student shall be eligible for a tuition aid grant under this act unless he is enrolled in a minimum of six (6) semester hours.~~

SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 1991, Section 626.7, is amended to read as follows:

Section 626.7 A college tuition aid grant shall be awarded annually to each eligible, qualified full-time or part-time undergraduate or graduate student enrolled in a curriculum leading

to a degree or certificate in an institution of collegiate grade or postsecondary institution providing ~~not less than a one-year~~ program of training to prepare students for employment in a recognized occupation in Oklahoma approved or accredited by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education or appropriate postsecondary agency in accordance with the following:

1. Eligibility. Each full-time or part-time resident student ~~as previously defined~~ will be eligible to receive a grant in an amount as provided in paragraph 2 of this section. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall determine by rules and regulations the maximum number of semesters a student may be eligible for grants. No student shall be eligible for grants unless ~~he~~ the student maintains such minimum standards of academic performance as are required by the institution in which ~~he~~ the student is enrolled.

In the event a student for any reason ceases to continue to be enrolled during the course of an academic year, ~~he~~ the student shall cease to be eligible for tuition aid.

2. Amount of grant. The amount of tuition aid grant to any student under this act for any semester shall represent a percentage not greater than seventy-five percent (75%) of the tuition and enrollment fees normally charged to residents of the State of Oklahoma by the institution of attendance ~~and shall not exceed One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) in one (1) academic year.~~ The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall determine by rules the annual maximum award amount based on an annual assessment of funds availability. The State Regents shall not increase the annual maximum award amount unless funding is sufficient to serve at least the same number of students as the previous academic year.

~~The~~ For the 2000-2001 academic year and each academic year thereafter, the percentage of aid shall be ~~determined by the amount of effective income of the eligible student. Effective income of an independent student shall be the income of the student and the spouse of the student, if applicable. Effective income of a dependent student shall be the income of the student and the spouse of the student, if applicable, and the parents or legal guardian of the student based on a need analysis system that is consistent with federal student financial aid regulations.~~ The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall set an annual award payment schedule upon which determination of the percentage is based shall be based upon a maximum grant of seventy-five percent (75%) of tuition and fees with grants based on lower percentages of tuition and fees being awarded to students who demonstrate lower financial need. , with an income range of from Seven Thousand Dollars (\$7,000.00) to Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000.00) at income intervals of One Thousand Dollars (\$1,000.00) as follows:

EFFECTIVE	PERCENTAGE
INCOME	OF AID
BELOW	

\$ 7,000	75%
8,000	70%
9,000	65%
10,000	60%
11,000	55%
12,000	50%
13,000	45%
14,000	40%
15,000	35%
16,000	30%
17,000	25%
18,000	20%
19,000	15%
20,000	10%

~~"Effective income" shall be defined as total taxable and nontaxable income less a per-household-member cost-of-living allowance. The allowance shall be calculated by dividing the current Oklahoma low median family income by the current median household size published by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby authorized to adopt rules and regulations to permit exceptions to the determination of effective income in cases of unusual financial hardship.~~

Any student who receives an award for the 1999-2000 academic year shall not be denied additional awards because of inability to meet the financial standards established in this act as long as other eligibility criteria continue to be met and as long as the award status of the student is renewed on an annual basis. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to establish procedures to determine the financial need of the student under the standards used during the 1999-2000 academic year until the initial degree requirements are met by the student.

Financial assistance received under this act will be considered as part of a student's financial aid package.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law not to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes reads as follows:

A. There is hereby created to continue until February 1, 2000, the Oklahoma Task Force on Qualified State Tuition Plans. The purpose of the Task Force shall be to study and prepare

recommendations concerning the viability of the Oklahoma Tuition Trust Act and its potential for enhancing or detracting from the implementation of the Oklahoma College Savings Plan Act.

B. The Task Force shall be composed of the following members:

1. The Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education or designee;

2. The State Treasurer or designee;

3. The Secretary of Education or designee;

4. The Director of the Office of State Finance or designee;

5. The State Auditor and Inspector or designee;

6. Three members appointed by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

7. Three members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

8. Three members appointed by the Governor.

C. The first meeting of the Task Force shall be called by the Chancellor of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. At the first meeting the Task Force shall select a chair from among the members. Thereafter, meetings shall be held at the call of the chair.

D. The Task Force shall:

1. Study and review prepaid tuition programs from other states;

2. Study how the Oklahoma Tuition Trust Act could be coordinated with the Oklahoma College Savings Plan Act;

3. Study possible use of state income tax deduction for contributions to qualified state tuition plans; and

4. Make recommendations to repeal or implement with any necessary amendments the Oklahoma Tuition Trust Act.

E. On or before February 1, 2000, the Task Force shall issue a report outlining its recommendation to the Governor, the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

F. Members of the Task Force shall not receive compensation for serving on the Task Force, but shall receive travel reimbursement as follows:

1. Legislative members of the Task Force shall be reimbursed for their necessary travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties in accordance with Section 456 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes from the legislative body in which they serve;

2. State agency employees who are members of the Task Force shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties by their respective agencies in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act; and

3. All other Task Force members shall be reimbursed for travel expenses incurred in the performance of their duties by the appointing authority in accordance with the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

G. Staffing for the Task Force shall be provided jointly by the Oklahoma State Senate and the Oklahoma House of Representatives staff.

SECTION 4. This act shall become effective July 1, 1999.

SECTION 5. It being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health and safety, an emergency is hereby declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

Passed the Senate the 24th day of May, 1999.

President of the Senate

Passed the House of Representatives the 25th day of May, 1999.

Speaker of the House of Representatives

