ENGROSSED HOUSE AMENDMENT
TO
ENGROSSED SENATE BILL NO. 520 By: Robinson of the Senate

and

Staggs of the House

( higher education - Oklahoma Tuition Equalization

Grant Act -

effective date -)

AMENDMENT NO. 1. Strike the stricken title, enacting clause and entire bill and insert

"An Act relating to higher education; enacting the Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Act; providing short title; creating the Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Program; stating purpose; providing criteria for eligibility; making grant contingent upon funding; stating amount of grant; providing for certain increases in grant; providing procedures for payment of grants; authorizing the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education to implement policies and procedures for administration; stating requirements for eligible institutions; stating priority for awarding grants; setting eligibility date for applications; providing for codification; providing an effective date; and declaring an emergency.

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

SECTION 1. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 2630 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

This act shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Act".

SECTION 2. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 2631 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

There is hereby created the Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant Program. The purpose of this program is to provide the maximum possible utilization of existing educational resources and facilities within this state, both public and private. To accomplish this purpose, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are authorized to award tuition equalization grants to Oklahoma residents enrolled as undergraduate students in any approved private or independent institution of higher education in this state.

SECTION 3. NEW LAW A new section of law to be codified in the Oklahoma Statutes as Section 2632 of Title 70, unless there is created a duplication in numbering, reads as follows:

A. To be eligible for a tuition equalization grant, a student shall:

1. Be an Oklahoma resident as defined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education;

2. Have enrolled as a full-time undergraduate student in an eligible institution of higher education as prescribed in subsection D of this section;

3. Meet the income eligibility level, which is the student's parent(s) income from taxable and nontaxable sources which shall not be more than Fifty Thousand Dollars ($50,000.00) per year, or the student's income if the student is independent and self-supporting as determined by the State Regents for Higher Education consistent with federal financial aid regulations;

4. Pay more tuition than is required at a comparable public institution of higher education and pay no less than the regular tuition required of all students enrolled at the institution where the student is enrolled; and

5. Maintain at least minimum standards of academic performance as required by the enrolling institution.

B. Contingent upon the availability of funding, the amount of an Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grant shall be Two Thousand Dollars ($2,000.00) per academic year, or One Thousand Dollars ($1,000.00) per academic semester, beginning with eligible students enrolled in the 2003-2004 school year. No tuition equalization grants shall be provided to students for attending summer terms or intersessions. In subsequent years, the amount of the grant shall be increased by a percentage that is equal to the annual weighted percentage of increase in tuition for all public institutions within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education.

C. The enrolling institution shall forward a student application, documentation of full-time enrollment status, and certification of resident status to the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education no later than October 15 for the fall semester and March 15 for the spring semester of each academic year. Subject to the availability of funds, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall award a tuition equalization grant to an eligible student through the institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled.

D. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall implement policies and procedures for the administration of this act and shall approve as eligible institutions of higher education only those private or independent, not-for-profit, colleges or universities that are domiciled within this state, meet approved program and accreditation standards as determined by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, and are fully accredited by the North Central Commission on Colleges and Schools.

E. If funds are not sufficient to provide grants for all eligible applicants, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall award grants on the basis of need and take into consideration

other grants and scholarships received by an eligible applicant when awarding grants. Students who have previously received a tuition equalization grant and who continue to meet the requirements for eligibility shall have absolute priority for continued financial support superior to any student who is applying for a grant for the first time.

F. Students enrolling as first-time freshmen for the 2003-2004 school year shall be the first class of students eligible to apply for Oklahoma Tuition Equalization Grants. In subsequent years, all previously eligible students and the first-time enrolling freshmen students shall be eligible to apply for a grant pursuant to this section.

SECTION 4. This act shall become effective July 1, 2003.

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 House of Representatives the 10th day of April, 2003.

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Presiding Officer of the House of Representatives

Passed the Senate the ____ day of _____, 2003.

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Presiding Officer of the Senate