

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1997

H

2

HOUSE BILL 157*
Committee Substitute Favorable 4/21/97

Short Title: Comm. College Scholarship Program.

(Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

February 13, 1997

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR NORTH CAROLINIANS ATTENDING COMMUNITY COLLEGES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. Article I of Chapter 115D of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read:

"§ 115D-9. The Education Improvement Program.

(a) Grants. – The State Board shall develop and implement the Education Improvement Program to provide grants for tuition and fees for eligible persons who enroll in a community college and pursue an associate degree. The State Board shall make determinations of eligibility to receive grants. In no event shall a grant exceed the total cost of tuition and fees charged by a community college. The State Education Assistance Authority shall administer the funding of the grants.

(b) Eligibility. – To be eligible to receive an Education Improvement Program grant, an applicant shall meet all of the following qualifications:

(1) Be a resident for tuition purposes under G.S. 116-143.1;

(2) Be a graduate of an accredited North Carolina high school or hold a recognized equivalent diploma or certificate received in North Carolina;

- 1 (3) Has not been convicted of any felony or any alcohol or controlled
2 substance related offense, or adjudicated a delinquent for acts that
3 would constitute a violation of those offenses if committed by an adult,
4 if the offense occurred before the person reached the age of 16; and
5 (4) Be found to be in financial need, as provided in subsection (c) of this
6 section.

7 Notwithstanding subdivision (3) of this subsection, the State Board may determine
8 that an applicant is eligible to receive a grant if the State Board determines that the
9 applicant has been fully rehabilitated and is otherwise eligible. The State Board is an
10 authorized agency under G.S. 7A-675 to have access to juvenile records for the purpose
11 of making determinations of eligibility. The State Board shall develop and implement
12 guidelines to determine whether a student is eligible to continue to receive Education
13 Improvement Program grants.

14 (c) Financial Need. – All applicants shall apply for Federal Title IV student
15 financial assistance. If the applicant is eligible for a Pell Grant of an amount less than the
16 total of tuition and fees, the amount of an Education Improvement Program grant shall be
17 equal to the difference between the amount of tuition and fees and the Pell Grant amount.
18 An applicant who is under 21 years of age and who is found to be ineligible for a Pell
19 Grant shall be found to be in financial need for purposes of an Education Improvement
20 Program grant if:

- 21 (1) The applicant's custodial parent or guardian has one dependent child
22 under the age of 21, and the adjusted gross income of the family for the
23 tax year immediately preceding the determination of financial need is
24 less than thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000);
25 (2) The applicant's custodial parent or guardian has two dependent children
26 under the age of 21, and the annual adjusted gross income of the family
27 for the tax year immediately preceding the determination of financial
28 need is less than thirty-five thousand dollars (\$35,000); or
29 (3) The applicant's custodial parent or guardian has three or more dependent
30 children under the age of 21, and the annual adjusted gross income of
31 the family for the tax year immediately preceding the determination of
32 financial need is less than forty thousand dollars (\$40,000).

33 Notwithstanding subdivisions (1) through (3) of this subsection, the State Board has
34 the authority to determine special circumstances under which an applicant who is under
35 21 years of age has demonstrated financial need. The State Board shall develop and
36 implement guidelines for determining the financial need of an applicant who is over 21
37 years of age and is not eligible to receive a Pell Grant."

38 Section 2. Article 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by
39 adding a new section to read:

40 "**§ 116-209.26. Education Improvement Grants.**

41 In addition to all other powers and duties under this Article, the Authority shall
42 administer the funding for the Education Improvement Grants awarded by the State

1 Board of Community Colleges under G.S. 115D-9. In order to accomplish the purposes
2 of this section, the Authority may:

3 (1) In consultation with the State Board of Community Colleges, adopt
4 rules to implement the funding of the Education Improvement Grants;

5 (2) Receive from the General Fund or other sources those funds the General
6 Assembly may authorize to cover, in addition to any other available
7 funds, the costs of tuition and fees required to be paid to eligible
8 students under G.S. 115D-9, both initial and continuing, for the coming
9 academic year; and

10 (3) Seek, accept, and expend funds from any source, including private
11 business, industry, foundations, and other groups as well as any federal
12 or other governmental funding available for this purpose."

13 Section 3. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Board of
14 Community Colleges the sum of eighteen million five hundred eighty-one thousand nine
15 hundred forty-four dollars (\$18,581,944) for the 1997-98 fiscal year and the sum of
16 nineteen million six thousand nine hundred eighteen dollars (\$19,006,918) for the 1998-
17 99 fiscal year to implement this act. The State Board of Community Colleges shall
18 allocate funds to the Education Assistance Authority according to a schedule of allocation
19 it establishes.

20 Section 4. This act becomes effective July 1, 1997, and applies to payments
21 made for academic years beginning with the 1997-98 academic year.