

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE BILL

No. 541 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY GREENLEAF, MUSTO, ORIE, M. WHITE, COSTA, O'PAKE,
LOGAN, LEMMOND, ERICKSON, BOSCOLA, RAFFERTY, PUNT AND
KITCHEN, MARCH 30, 2005

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 30, 2005

AN ACT

1 Establishing a tuition credit program for certain members of
2 volunteer fire companies, volunteer ambulance services and
3 volunteer rescue squads and their dependent children and
4 spouses.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Volunteer
9 Emergency Service Tuition Credit Program Act.

10 Section 2. Definitions.

11 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
12 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "Community college." A public college or technical institute
15 which is established and operated under Article XIX-A of the act
16 of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public School
17 Code of 1949, and all branches or campuses of a community
18 college.

1 "Firefighter." A member of a volunteer fire company.

2 "State Fire Commissioner" or "commissioner." The
3 Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioner appointed under section 3
4 of the act of November 13, 1995 (P.L.604, No.61), known as the
5 State Fire Commissioner Act.

6 "Volunteer." A firefighter or member of a volunteer
7 ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad.

8 "Volunteer ambulance service." Any nonprofit chartered
9 corporation, association or organization located in this
10 Commonwealth and regularly engaged in the service of providing
11 emergency medical care and transportation of patients.

12 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
13 association or organization located in this Commonwealth that
14 provides fire protection services and may offer other voluntary
15 emergency services within this Commonwealth. Voluntary emergency
16 services may include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
17 services.

18 "Volunteer rescue squad." Any nonprofit chartered
19 corporation, association or organization located in this
20 Commonwealth which provides rescue services in this
21 Commonwealth.

22 Section 3. Tuition credit program.

23 (a) General.--A person who is an active member of a
24 volunteer fire company, volunteer ambulance service or volunteer
25 rescue squad in good standing and the dependent children and
26 spouse of such volunteer shall be eligible to enroll in
27 postsecondary courses on a tuition-credit basis in a community
28 college.

29 (b) Amount.--A volunteer and the volunteer's dependent
30 children and spouse shall be eligible to receive tuition credit

1 in the aggregate amount of \$600 per year, not to exceed an
2 aggregate maximum of \$2,400 over a four-year service period.

3 (c) Availability.--The tuition credit may be utilized for a
4 course offered by the community college provided that available
5 classroom space permits and that tuition-paying students
6 constitute the minimum number required for the course.

7 (d) Fees.--Nothing in this act shall be construed to
8 prohibit a community college from requiring registration and lab
9 fees for individuals attending courses under this act.

10 Section 4. Eligibility.

11 In order for a volunteer or a volunteer's dependent child or
12 spouse to be eligible to receive tuition credit, the volunteer
13 shall agree to serve as a member of a volunteer fire company,
14 volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad for a
15 minimum of four years and sign an agreement with the volunteer
16 organization pledging four years of service in exchange for the
17 tuition credit. Following each year of active volunteer
18 services, the volunteer organization shall provide the State
19 Fire Commissioner with a letter verifying that the volunteer has
20 been a member in good standing for the past 12 months.

21 Section 5. Verification of service.

22 Upon being accepted and enrolled in a community college, the
23 volunteer, dependent child or spouse shall provide the community
24 college with a sworn or official statement of fact by the
25 commissioner attesting that the volunteer has performed the
26 service required for the tuition credit. Upon completion of each
27 semester, the volunteer shall submit a transcript to the
28 commissioner to be maintained in a permanent record. The
29 volunteer, dependent child or spouse shall maintain a "C" grade
30 average in order to continue eligibility for the tuition credit

1 program.

2 Section 6. Issuance of certificate of authorization.

3 The commissioner shall issue a certificate of authorization
4 to the volunteer, dependent child or spouse to be presented to
5 the community college, stating that the volunteer, parent or
6 spouse is a member in good standing of a volunteer fire company,
7 volunteer ambulance service or volunteer rescue squad.

8 Section 7. State Fire Commissioner duties.

9 The Office of the State Fire Commissioner shall develop such
10 procedures and forms as it deems necessary to carry out the
11 provisions of this act.

12 Section 8. Effective date.

13 This act shall take effect in 30 days.