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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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HOUSE BILL

No. 1075 Session of  
2011

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INTRODUCED BY B. BOYLE, PAYTON, K. BOYLE, V. BROWN, BROWNLEE,  
CALTAGIRONE, D. COSTA, DALEY, DAVIS, DAVIDSON, FABRIZIO,  
GEIST, GEORGE, GIBBONS, GOODMAN, HENNESSEY, HORNAMAN,  
JOHNSON, JOSEPHS, KIRKLAND, KORTZ, KULA, LONGIETTI, MAHONEY,  
MCGEEHAN, M. O'BRIEN, PASHINSKI, READSHAW, SABATINA, SANTONI,  
K. SMITH, STURLA, WAGNER AND YOUNGBLOOD, MARCH 17, 2011

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REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 17, 2011

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AN ACT

1 Establishing a Statewide academic scholarship program to be  
2 known as the Reliable Educational Assistance for College  
3 Hopefuls Scholarship; and providing for the powers and duties  
4 of the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency.

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 Reliable  
9 Educational Assistance for College Hopefuls Scholarship Act.

10 Section 2. Purpose.

11 The purpose of this act is to reward educational excellence  
12 and provide an incentive to Pennsylvania students to pursue  
13 higher education within this Commonwealth.

14 Section 3. Definitions.

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

1 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
2 Agency.

3 "Fund." The REACH Scholarship Fund established in section 6.

4 "Grade point average." The numbered grade average calculated  
5 using a 4.0 scale.

6 "Private institution of higher education." An institution of  
7 higher education located in this Commonwealth that provides an  
8 organized four-year program of undergraduate instruction toward  
9 a baccalaureate degree and that is not a State-owned institution  
10 or State-related institution.

11 "REACH." The Reliable Educational Assistance for College  
12 Hopefuls Scholarship established under section 4.

13 "State-owned institution." An institution that is part of  
14 the State System of Higher Education pursuant to Article XX-A of  
15 the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the Public  
16 School Code of 1949.

17 "State-related institution." Any of the following: The  
18 Pennsylvania State University, the University of Pittsburgh,  
19 Temple University and Lincoln University and their branch  
20 campuses.

21 "Student." A school-age resident of this Commonwealth who  
22 attends or is about to attend a State-owned institution, State-  
23 related institution or private institution of higher education  
24 located in this Commonwealth.

25 Section 4. REACH Scholarship.

26 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship is established  
27 within the agency.

28 (b) Issuance of scholarships.--

29 (1) The agency shall provide scholarships, which may be  
30 referred to as REACH Scholarships, to all students who meet

1 the requirements of subsection (d) or (f). The scholarships  
2 may be issued to a student only upon confirmation from the  
3 State-owned institution, State-related institution or private  
4 institution of higher education to which the student has  
5 enrolled full time.

6 (2) The scholarships shall be available for four years  
7 or upon completion of a baccalaureate degree, whichever  
8 occurs earlier.

9 (3) The scholarships shall only be used for tuition and  
10 mandatory fees.

11 (4) The scholarships shall be awarded solely on the  
12 basis of merit and without regard to need.

13 (5) The scholarships shall only be awarded to students  
14 who are high school seniors during or after the school year  
15 in which this section takes effect.

16 (c) Calculation of award.--

17 (1) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a  
18 State-owned institution shall receive a full-tuition  
19 scholarship.

20 (2) Each eligible student who will attend or attends a  
21 State-related institution or private institution of higher  
22 education shall receive the lesser of a full-tuition  
23 scholarship or a scholarship equal to the average tuition at  
24 the State-owned institutions as calculated annually by the  
25 agency.

26 (d) Eligibility.--To receive a scholarship under this  
27 section, a student must meet all of the following requirements:

28 (1) Pennsylvania residency for at least three years  
29 prior to application for the REACH Scholarship.

30 (2) Pennsylvania residency during the term of the

1 scholarship.

2 (3) Cumulative high school grade point average of 3.0 or  
3 higher for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high  
4 school. If the student does not graduate from high school or  
5 completes a home study program meeting the requirements of  
6 section 1327.1 of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14),  
7 known as the Public School Code of 1949, the agency shall  
8 determine the eligibility of the student.

9 (4) Cumulative high school attendance of at least 90%  
10 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school  
11 unless the agency determines there are extenuating  
12 circumstances, including, but not limited to, approved  
13 medical or personal leave of absence. If the student does not  
14 graduate from high school but completes a home study program  
15 meeting the requirements of section 1327.1 of the Public  
16 School Code of 1949, the agency shall determine the  
17 eligibility of the student.

18 (5) Satisfactory disciplinary record or conduct record  
19 for the sophomore, junior and senior years of high school. If  
20 the student does not meet this requirement but meets or  
21 exceeds all other requirements under this subsection, the  
22 agency shall determine eligibility of the student.

23 (6) Satisfactory academic progress toward completion of  
24 a course of study at a State-owned institution, State-related  
25 institution or private institution of higher education as  
26 provided under subsection (f).

27 (7) Entrance into a written agreement with the agency to  
28 maintain Pennsylvania residency for four years after  
29 completion of a baccalaureate degree. The student shall  
30 reimburse the Commonwealth all amounts received under this

1 act and interest thereon, at a rate equal to the average  
2 Stafford loan through the term of the scholarship, if the  
3 student fails to comply with the terms of the written  
4 agreement.

5 (8) Apply for the Free Application for Federal Student  
6 Aid each year during the term of the scholarship.

7 (9) Complete at least 100 hours of community service  
8 each academic year. The community service must be documented  
9 by a supervisor and approved by the agency.

10 (e) Contents of application.--The application of a student  
11 who seeks a scholarship as prescribed by the agency must  
12 include:

13 (1) All information and documentation required by the  
14 agency.

15 (2) If the student is under 18 years of age, the  
16 signature of a parent or guardian.

17 (3) A verified statement of grade point average,  
18 attendance and disciplinary record or conduct record from the  
19 appropriate educational institution.

20 (f) Maintenance of scholarship.--

21 (1) Except as provided under paragraph (2), a student  
22 must maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or higher during  
23 each semester at a State-owned institution, State-related  
24 institution or private institution of higher education  
25 through the term of the scholarship, unless the agency  
26 determines that there are extenuating circumstances,  
27 including, but not limited to, approved medical or personal  
28 leave of absence.

29 (2) In the event that a student receives a grade point  
30 average below 3.0 during a semester at a State-owned

1 institution, State-related institution or private institution  
2 of higher education, the agency shall place the student on  
3 scholarship probation. If a student on scholarship probation  
4 receives a grade point average below 3.0 in any following  
5 semester, the scholarship shall be terminated.

6 (3) A student must complete 40 hours of community  
7 service during each 12-month period during the term of the  
8 scholarship, which community service must be verified by the  
9 agency.

10 (g) Scholarship termination and transfer.--

11 (1) If a student who has received a scholarship  
12 terminates enrollment in the educational institution to which  
13 the student has enrolled full time during the academic year,  
14 the educational institution shall notify the agency in  
15 writing and shall return all unused portions of the  
16 scholarship.

17 (2) Returned amounts shall be deposited in the REACH  
18 Scholarship Fund.

19 (3) A student may transfer a scholarship from one State-  
20 owned institution, State-related institution or private  
21 institution of higher education to another.

22 (h) Limitation.--A scholarship shall be paid only from the  
23 REACH Scholarship Fund.

24 Section 5. Administration.

25 (a) Verification.--The agency shall monitor and verify a  
26 student's compliance with all the requirements under this act.

27 (b) Enforcement.--The agency shall enforce repayment of all  
28 scholarships for a student who does not comply with the  
29 provisions of this act, to include use of all lawful collection  
30 procedures and the use of private collection agencies.

1 (c) Exclusion from taxation.--No scholarship received by a  
2 student shall not be considered taxable income for purposes of  
3 Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6, No.2), known as  
4 the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

5 (d) Financial assistance.--No scholarship received by a  
6 student shall be considered financial assistance or  
7 appropriations to the approved education institution.

8 (e) Regulations.--The agency shall adopt regulations and  
9 procedures necessary to carry out the purposes of this act.

10 Section 6. REACH Scholarship Fund.

11 (a) Establishment.--The REACH Scholarship Fund is  
12 established as a separate fund in the State Treasury.

13 (b) Administration.--The fund shall be administered by the  
14 agency.

15 (c) Use of fund.--The purpose of the fund shall be to  
16 provide full tuition scholarships or equivalent scholarships to  
17 students who have been determined eligible in accordance with  
18 this act.

19 (d) Funding source.--

20 (1) Donations and contributions from all public and  
21 private sources, including the Federal Government, and any  
22 appropriations or transfers authorized by the General  
23 Assembly may be deposited in the fund.

24 (2) All interest earned by the fund and all refunds and  
25 repayments shall be credited to the fund.

26 Section 7. Report to General Assembly.

27 On or before April 1 following the effective date of this  
28 section, and in each succeeding year in which REACH Scholarships  
29 are awarded, the agency shall provide a report to the General  
30 Assembly regarding the implementation and administration of this

1 act.

2 Section 8. Effective date.

3 This act shall take effect July 1, 2011, or immediately,  
4 whichever is later.