

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 329 Session of
2001

INTRODUCED BY GANNON, ALLEN, M. BAKER, BARD, BARRAR, BASTIAN, BELARDI, BELFANTI, BOYES, CAPPELLI, CASORIO, CAWLEY, CIVERA, L. I. COHEN, M. COHEN, COLEMAN, COY, DAILEY, DALLY, DeLUCA, DeWEESE, J. EVANS, FEESE, FICHTER, FLEAGLE, FLICK, FORCIER, FREEMAN, GEORGE, GRUCELA, HALUSKA, HENNESSEY, HERMAN, HERSHEY, HESS, HUTCHINSON, LaGROTTA, LESCOVITZ, LEVDANSKY, MAJOR, MARSICO, McILHATTAN, MELIO, MICOZZIE, S. MILLER, NAILOR, ORIE, PETRONE, PHILLIPS, PIPPY, PISTELLA, RAYMOND, READSHAW, SAINATO, SANTONI, SATHER, SCHRODER, SCHULER, SCRIMENTI, SEMMEL, SHANER, B. SMITH, SOLOBAY, STABACK, STAIRS, STEELMAN, SURRA, E. Z. TAYLOR, TRELLO, C. WILLIAMS, WILT, WOJNAROSKI, YUDICHAK AND KAISER, JANUARY 31, 2001

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON VETERANS AFFAIRS AND EMERGENCY
PREPAREDNESS, JANUARY 31, 2001

AN ACT

1 Providing for a Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement
2 Program for volunteer firefighters.

3 The General Assembly finds that, since volunteer firefighters
4 provide essential public services and save taxpayers billions of
5 dollars annually in communities throughout this Commonwealth,
6 this act shall provide significant assistance to them in
7 attaining a quality postsecondary education.

8 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
9 hereby enacts as follows:

10 Section 1. Short title.

11 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Volunteer
12 Firefighter Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement

1 Program Act.

2 Section 2. Definitions.

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

6 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency.

7 "Program." The Volunteer Firefighter Postsecondary Education
8 Tuition Reimbursement Program.

9 "State-owned university." A university which is part of the
10 State System of Higher Education as established under Article
11 XX-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the
12 Public School Code of 1949. The term includes any branch and
13 campus of a State-owned university.

14 "State-related university." Any of the following:

15 (1) The Pennsylvania State University.

16 (2) The University of Pittsburgh.

17 (3) Temple University.

18 (4) Lincoln University.

19 The term includes any branch campus.

20 "Volunteer fire company." A nonprofit chartered corporation,
21 association or organization which is located in this
22 Commonwealth, provides fire protection services and may offer
23 other voluntary emergency services within this Commonwealth.
24 Voluntary emergency services provided by a volunteer fire
25 company include voluntary ambulance and voluntary rescue
26 services.

27 Section 3. Program.

28 (a) Establishment.--There is established the Volunteer
29 Firefighter Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement
30 Program.

(b) Credits or payments.--The program consists of a credit or payment by a State-owned university or State-related university of 50% of a qualified student's share of tuition for each course credit, with payment from the Commonwealth going directly to the State-owned university or State-related university for such credits or payments.

(c) Qualifications.--An applicant who meets the following criteria is eligible for participation in the program:

(1) The applicant is a resident of this Commonwealth.

(2) The applicant is a member in good standing of a volunteer fire company.

(3) The applicant provides the State-owned university or State-related university with a sworn or official statement of fact by the fire chief, president or commissioner of a volunteer fire department of which the applicant is a volunteer, attesting that the applicant is a member in good standing of the volunteer fire company.

Section 4. Reimbursement of tuition costs.

The agency shall reimburse the State-owned university or State-related university an amount equal to 50% of the cost of a course credit for each course in which tuition reimbursement is granted pursuant to this act. The reimbursements must be verified by enrollment and itemized by the applicant for auditing purposes. The reimbursements shall be made annually by the agency to the appropriate State-related university or State-owned university.

Section 5. Funding.

The source of funding shall be annual appropriations to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency in the General Appropriation Act from the General Fund in an amount sufficient

1 to make tuition reimbursement payments pursuant to this act.

2 Section 6. Regulations.

3 The agency shall promulgate regulations necessary to carry
4 out this act.

5 Section 7. Effective date.

6 This act shall take effect July 1, 2001, or immediately,
7 whichever is later.