
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 696 Session of
2005

INTRODUCED BY ALLEN, B. SMITH, ARGALL, DeWEESE, BALDWIN, BEBKO-JONES, BELARDI, BELFANTI, BOYD, BUNT, CALTAGIRONE, CAWLEY, CRAHALLA, DALEY, J. EVANS, FABRIZIO, FAIRCHILD, FRANKEL, FREEMAN, GEIST, GEORGE, GILLESPIE, GINGRICH, GOODMAN, GRUCELA, HERMAN, HESS, JAMES, KILLION, KOTIK, LEDERER, LEVDANSKY, MARKOSEK, S. MILLER, O'NEILL, PALLONE, PHILLIPS, PICKETT, PISTELLA, RAYMOND, READSHAW, REICHLEY, ROHRER, ROSS, SCAVELLO, SCHRODER, SEMMEL, SHANER, STABACK, SURRA, E. Z. TAYLOR, THOMAS, TURZAI, WALKO, WILT, YOUNGBLOOD, ZUG, SAMUELSON AND MAHER, MARCH 1, 2005

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, MARCH 1, 2005

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Keystone Scholars Award to recognize and reward
2 excellence in academic achievement and performance among
3 graduating seniors in this Commonwealth's public secondary
4 schools.

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 Keystone
9 Scholars Award Act.

10 Section 2. Purpose.

11 The Keystone Scholars Award is hereby established within the
12 Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency to recognize and
13 reward excellence in academic achievement and performance by
14 selected public secondary school seniors in this Commonwealth
15 and to encourage them to attend institutions of higher education

1 within this Commonwealth.

2 Section 3. 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 Higher Education Assistance
7 Agency.

8 "Award." The Keystone Scholars Award established under this
9 act.

10 "Board." The board of school directors of a school district,
11 a joint board or an area vocational-technical school or the
12 board of trustees of a charter school.

13 "Eligible institution." A community college, State-owned or
14 State-related college or university, vocational or other
15 postsecondary institution located in this Commonwealth that is
16 authorized by the Department of Education to provide approved
17 courses of study and grant degrees.

18 "School entity." A public school district, joint school,
19 charter school or area vocational-technical school.

20 Section 4. Selection process.

21 (a) Member of senior class.--Each school entity shall
22 annually select, for each of its secondary schools, a student
23 who is a member of the senior class and who exemplifies
24 qualities of high academic achievement and excellence in
25 performance as the recipient of the award.

26 (b) Criteria and procedures.--Each board shall adopt a
27 policy setting the criteria and procedures to be used in
28 selecting its award recipient which shall, at a minimum, comply
29 with the requirements of section 5 (relating to minimum
30 qualifications). The award shall be made without regard to the

1 student's race, creed, color, sex, national origin or ancestry.

2 (c) Presentation of award.--The award shall be presented to
3 the recipient at the school entity's annual commencement
4 exercises.

5 Section 5. Minimum qualifications.

6 At a minimum, a candidate for the award shall:

7 (1) Be a current twelfth grade student enrolled at a
8 Commonwealth public secondary school, charter school or area
9 vocational-technical school.

10 (2) Be a domiciliary of this Commonwealth.

11 (3) Hold a 3.5 grade point average, on a scale of 4.0,
12 by the end of the student's junior year.

13 (4) Attain a composite score of 1200 or higher on the
14 Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), or equivalent American
15 College Test (ACT) score, on any single test administration.

16 (5) Rank academically in the top 5% of the student's
17 graduating class.

18 (6) Have been accepted for admission in the fall term
19 immediately following secondary school graduation as a full-
20 time student in an eligible institution.

21 (7) Have a history of participation in extracurricular
22 activities, community service or work experience while
23 enrolled at the awarding high school.

24 Section 6. Award.

25 (a) Amount.--Each student selected by a school entity shall
26 be presented an initial award of up to \$1,000, to a lifetime
27 maximum of \$4,000, and shall be referred to as a Keystone
28 Scholar.

29 (b) Use of award.--The award recipient shall be free to
30 attend any eligible institution of the recipient's choice and

1 shall apply the award toward the tuition, room, board, books and
2 fees of that institution. The eligible institution is not
3 required to accept the award recipient, but is free to exact
4 compliance with its own admission requirements, standards and
5 policies.

6 Section 7. Renewal of award.

7 (a) Renewal period.--Each award is renewable annually for a
8 period not to exceed an additional three academic years beyond
9 the first year of the award.

10 (b) Qualifications for renewal.--Qualifications for annual
11 renewal of the award include the following:

12 (1) Maintaining full-time enrollment at an eligible
13 institution and a minimum grade point average of 3.0 or
14 higher on a scale of 4.0 or its equivalent.

15 (2) Making satisfactory academic progress toward
16 completion of a course of study.

17 (3) Continued eligibility as determined by the agency,
18 including continued Pennsylvania domicile and enrollment in
19 an institution of higher education located within this
20 Commonwealth.

21 Section 8. Powers and duties of agency.

22 (a) Public information.--The agency shall prepare and
23 supervise the issuance of public information concerning the
24 provisions of the award.

25 (b) Submission of information.--The agency shall prescribe
26 the form, set time lines and regulate the submission of
27 information from each school entity regarding the selection of
28 its recipient of the award.

29 (c) Initial award.--The agency shall establish procedures
30 for making the initial award to the recipients and for annual

1 renewal of the awards.

2 (d) Disbursement of funds.--The agency is authorized to
3 disburse awards from funds specifically appropriated for the
4 purposes of this act.

5 (e) Rules and regulations.--The agency shall have the power
6 to adopt rules and regulations to implement, administer and
7 enforce this act.

8 Section 9. Miscellaneous provisions.

9 (a) Exclusion from taxable income.--Awards received by a
10 student under this act shall not be considered taxable income
11 for purposes of Article III of the act of March 4, 1971 (P.L.6,
12 No.2), known as the Tax Reform Code of 1971.

13 (b) Eligible institution unaffected.--Awards received by
14 students under this act shall not be considered financial
15 assistance or appropriations to the eligible institutions.

16 (c) Student aid.--A Keystone Scholars Award shall not be
17 used when determining an applicant's eligibility and need for
18 student grant programs or other student aid programs
19 administered by the agency.

20 (d) Other student aid.--If other student aid must be
21 adjusted due to the receipt of funding under this act, loans
22 must be reduced first, then work-study or other employment and
23 then grant or scholarship aid.

24 Section 10. Effective date.

25 This act shall take effect July 1, 2005, or immediately,
26 whichever is later.