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THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

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**SENATE BILL**

**No. 1315** Session of  
2008

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INTRODUCED BY WAUGH, BAKER, RAFFERTY, PUNT, O'PAKE, MADIGAN,  
KASUNIC, FONTANA, ERICKSON, BOSCOLA, ORIE, KITCHEN,  
TOMLINSON, EICHELBERGER, WONDERLING, REGOLA, LOGAN, CORMAN,  
ARMSTRONG, BROWNE, BRUBAKER, ROBBINS, PIPPY, EARLL, COSTA,  
WOZNIAK, C. WILLIAMS, FOLMER, M. WHITE, D. WHITE, RHOADES,  
McILHINNEY, DINNIMAN AND STOUT, MARCH 20, 2008

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REFERRED TO EDUCATION, MARCH 20, 2008

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AN ACT

1 Providing for a Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement  
2 Program for volunteer firefighters and emergency services  
3 personnel.

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

10 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
11 hereby enacts as follows:

12 Section 1. Short title.

13 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Volunteer  
14 Firefighter and Emergency Services Postsecondary Education  
15 Tuition Reimbursement Program Act.

16 Section 2. Definitions.

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

4 "Agency." The Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
5 Agency.

6 "Community college." An institution established pursuant to  
7 Article XIX-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14),  
8 known as the Public School Code of 1949, or the former act of  
9 August 24, 1963 (P.L.1132, No.484), known as the Community  
10 College Act of 1963.

11 "State-owned university." A university which is part of the  
12 State System of Higher Education as established under Article  
13 XX-A of the act of March 10, 1949 (P.L.30, No.14), known as the  
14 Public School Code of 1949, and all branches and campuses of a  
15 State-owned university.

16 "State-related university." Any of the following  
17 universities, including any of their branch campuses:

18 (1) The Pennsylvania State University.

19 (2) The University of Pittsburgh.

20 (3) Temple University.

21 (4) Lincoln University.

22 Section 3. Tuition assistance program.

23 (a) Establishment.--The Volunteer Firefighter and Emergency  
24 Services Postsecondary Education Tuition Reimbursement Program  
25 is established in the agency.

26 (b) Credits or payments.--The tuition reimbursement program  
27 shall consist of a credit or payment by a community college,  
28 State-owned university or State-related university of 50% of a  
29 qualified student's share of tuition for each course credit,  
30 with payment from the Commonwealth going directly to the

1 community college, State-owned university or State-related  
2 university for such credits or payments.

3 (c) Qualifications.--Any applicant who meets the following  
4 criteria shall be eligible for tuition assistance under this  
5 act:

6 (1) The applicant must be a resident of this  
7 Commonwealth.

8 (2) The applicant has successfully completed the  
9 requirements for and has received certification as a  
10 Firefighter I, II or III, Fire Officer I or II or Fire  
11 Instructor I or II from the Pennsylvania Fire Academy or one  
12 of its delegated authorities consistent with the National  
13 Board of Professional Qualifications or the applicant is  
14 certified as an Emergency Medical Technician by the  
15 Department of Health as provided for in the act of July 3,  
16 1985 (P.L.164, No.45), known as the Emergency Medical  
17 Services Act.

18 (3) The applicant must provide the community college,  
19 State-owned university or State-related university with a  
20 sworn statement of fact by the fire chief, president or  
21 commissioner of a volunteer fire department, nonprofit  
22 ambulance service, nonprofit rescue squad or nonprofit  
23 hazardous material response team, of which the applicant is a  
24 volunteer, attesting that the applicant has participated in  
25 at least 30% of the volunteer organization's emergency  
26 responses within the last 18 months. A junior volunteer 16  
27 through 18 years of age must have participated in at least  
28 20% of the emergency responses and have attended at least 20  
29 hours of training or classroom instruction on an annual  
30 basis, as certified by the fire chief, president or

1 commissioner of the volunteer organization.

2 (4) The applicant must make an application to the agency  
3 for any other financial assistance.

4 (d) Limitation.--No applicant shall be eligible for tuition  
5 reimbursement under this act for more than five academic years.

6 Section 4. Reimbursement of tuition costs.

7 The agency shall reimburse the community college, State-owned  
8 university or State-related university an amount equal to 50% of  
9 the cost of a course credit for each course where tuition  
10 reimbursement is granted pursuant to this act. The  
11 reimbursements shall be verified by enrollment and itemized by  
12 the applicant for auditing purposes under this act. The  
13 reimbursements shall be made annually by the agency to the  
14 appropriate community college, State-related university or  
15 State-owned university.

16 Section 5. Funding.

17 The General Assembly shall annually include in the  
18 appropriation to the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance  
19 Agency in the General Appropriation Act an appropriation from  
20 the General Fund in an amount sufficient to make tuition  
21 reimbursement payments pursuant to this act.

22 Section 6. Regulations.

23 The agency shall in a manner provided by law promulgate rules  
24 and regulations necessary to carry out this act.

25 Section 7. Effective date.

26 This act shall take effect July 1, 2008, or immediately,  
27 whichever is later.