

FIRST REGULAR SESSION

[PERFECTED]

SENATE SUBSTITUTE FOR

SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR

SENATE BILL NO. 71

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR GREGORY (15).

1178S.06P

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto two new sections relating to college tuition for public safety personnel.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto
2 two new sections, to be known as sections 173.2655 and 173.2660,
3 to read as follows:

173.2655. 1. This section and section 173.2660 shall
2 be known and may be cited as the "Public Safety Recruitment
3 and Retention Act".

4 2. For purposes of this section and section 173.2660,
5 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
6 following terms mean:

7 (1) "Advanced emergency medical technician", as such
8 term is defined in section 190.100;

9 (2) "Department", the department of higher education
10 and workforce development;

11 (3) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is
12 defined in section 190.100;

13 (4) "Firefighter", any officer or employee of a fire
14 department who is employed for the purpose of fighting

15 fires, excluding volunteer firefighters and anyone employed
16 in a clerical or other capacity not involving fire-fighting
17 duties;

18 (5) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the
19 United States Department of Education for purposes of the
20 Free Application for Student Financial Aid;

21 (6) "Line of duty", any action that public safety
22 personnel is authorized or obligated by law, rule, or
23 regulation to perform, related to or as a condition of
24 employment or service;

25 (7) "Open seat", a vacant position in a class, course,
26 or program that is available for enrollment, and which may
27 become available when a student drops out or transfers, or
28 when a class, course, or program has unused capacity,
29 allowing new students to register or enroll;

30 (8) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section
31 190.100;

32 (9) "Police officer", any person who, by virtue of
33 office or public employment, is vested by law with the power
34 and duty to make arrests for violation of the laws of the
35 state of Missouri or ordinances of any municipality thereof,
36 while acting within the scope of his or her authority as an
37 employee of a public law enforcement agency, as such term is
38 defined in section 590.1040;

39 (10) "Public institution of higher education", a
40 public community college, state college, or state university
41 located in Missouri;

42 (11) "Public safety personnel", includes any police
43 officer, firefighter, paramedic, telecommunicator first
44 responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced
45 emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized

46 by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or
47 treatment;

48 (12) "Telecommunicator first responder", as such term
49 is defined in section 650.320;

50 (13) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set
51 by the governing body of a public institution of higher
52 education, including fees such as course fees, activity
53 fees, technology fees, and mandatory fees charged by such
54 institution to all full-time students as a condition of
55 enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books,
56 and any other educational materials, equipment, or supplies.

57 3. Subject to appropriation, public safety personnel
58 with at least six years of service shall be entitled to an
59 award worth up to one hundred percent of the resident
60 tuition charges of a public institution of higher education
61 if the individual:

62 (1) Possesses one of the following:

63 (a) A current, valid license issued by the department
64 of health and senior services authorizing such person to
65 serve as an emergency medical technician, advanced emergency
66 medical technician, or paramedic;

67 (b) A current, valid license issued by the peace
68 officer standards and training commission authorizing such
69 person to serve as a peace officer pursuant to the
70 provisions of chapter 590;

71 (c) A current, valid certificate issued by the
72 division of fire safety authorizing such person to serve as
73 a firefighter; or

74 (d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful
75 completion of any ongoing training requirements pursuant to
76 section 650.340; and

77 (e) For all public safety personnel, a certificate of
78 verification signed by the individual's supervisor or
79 employer verifying that such individual is currently
80 employed full-time as public safety personnel and trained
81 and authorized by law or rule to render emergency medical
82 assistance or treatment;

83 (2) Meets all admission requirements of the public
84 institution of higher education;

85 (3) Has not already earned a baccalaureate degree;

86 (4) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or
87 baccalaureate degree in one of the following academic
88 subject areas:

89 (a) For police officers, eligible subjects include
90 forensic science, fisheries and wildlife, political science,
91 psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology,
92 global studies, Spanish, journalism, advertising, public
93 relations, nutrition and health sciences, communication
94 sciences and disorders, and criminal justice;

95 (b) For firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical
96 technicians, and advanced emergency medical technicians,
97 eligible subjects include biology, chemistry, biochemistry,
98 microbiology, nutrition and health sciences, communication
99 sciences and disorders, Spanish, advertising, public
100 relations, paramedicine, fire science, fire technology, fire
101 administration, fire management, communications, homeland
102 security, emergency management, disaster management, and
103 crisis management; and

104 (c) For telecommunicator first responders, eligible
105 subjects include any subject specified in paragraph (a) or
106 (b) of this subdivision;

107 (5) Submits verification of the professional license
108 or certificate and the certificate of verification required

109 by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the department, in
110 a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

111 (6) Files with the department documentation showing
112 proof of employment as public safety personnel and proof of
113 residence in Missouri each year such individual or such
114 individual's legal dependent applies for and receives the
115 tuition award;

116 (7) First applies for all other forms of federal and
117 state student financial aid before applying for a tuition
118 award, including, but not limited to, filing the United
119 States Department of Education Free Application for Federal
120 Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial
121 assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section
122 3301, et seq.; and

123 (8) Submits a document to the department confirming
124 that the public safety personnel has satisfied the
125 provisions of subdivision (7) of this subsection, to be
126 submitted in a form and manner as prescribed by the
127 department.

128 4. Public safety personnel may receive the tuition
129 award pursuant to subsection 3 of this section for up to
130 five years if they otherwise continue to be eligible for the
131 tuition award. The five years of tuition award eligibility
132 starts once the individual applies for and receives the
133 tuition award for the first time and is available to such
134 individual for the next five consecutive years or the
135 individual's achievement of one hundred twenty credit hours,
136 whichever occurs first.

137 5. Subject to appropriation, a legal dependent of
138 public safety personnel with at least ten years of service
139 shall be entitled to a tuition award worth up to one hundred
140 percent of the resident tuition charges of any public

141 institution of higher education for an associate or
142 baccalaureate degree program if such public safety personnel
143 satisfies the provisions of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6)
144 of subsection 3 of this section and the legal dependent:

145 (1) Executes an agreement with the department in
146 accordance with the provisions of section 173.2660;

147 (2) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree;

148 (3) Meets all admission requirements of the public
149 institution of higher education;

150 (4) First applies for all other forms of federal and
151 state student financial aid before applying for a tuition
152 award, including, but not limited to, filing the United
153 States Department of Education Free Application for Federal
154 Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial
155 assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section
156 3301, et seq.;

157 (5) Submits a document to the department confirming
158 that the legal dependent has satisfied subdivision (4) of
159 this subsection, to be submitted in a form and manner as
160 prescribed by the department;

161 (6) Submits the verification required pursuant to
162 subsection 8 of this section to the department; and

163 (7) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or
164 baccalaureate degree in any one of the subject areas
165 specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of subdivision (4) of
166 subsection 3 of this section.

167 6. A legal dependent may receive the tuition award for
168 up to five years if the public safety personnel and the
169 legal dependent continue to be eligible for such tuition
170 award. The five years of tuition award eligibility starts
171 once the legal dependent applies for and receives the
172 tuition award for the first time and is available to such

173 legal dependent for the next five consecutive years or the
174 legal dependent's achievement of one hundred twenty credit
175 hours, whichever occurs first.

176 7. The tuition award shall be worth up to one hundred
177 percent of the public safety personnel's or the legal
178 dependent's tuition remaining due after subtracting awarded
179 federal financial aid grants and state scholarships and
180 grants for the eligible public safety personnel or legal
181 dependent during the time the public safety personnel or
182 legal dependent is enrolled. To remain eligible, the public
183 safety personnel or legal dependent shall comply with all
184 requirements of the institution for continued attendance and
185 award of an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

186 8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall
187 include a verification of the public safety personnel's
188 satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5),
189 and (6) of subsection 3 of this section. The public safety
190 personnel shall include such verification when he or she or
191 his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for
192 a tuition waiver.

193 (2) The death of public safety personnel in the line
194 of duty which occurs after submission of an application for
195 a tuition award shall not disqualify such individual's
196 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the
197 tuition award. In such case, in lieu of submitting the
198 certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1)
199 of this subsection, the legal dependent shall submit a
200 statement attesting that:

201 (a) At the time of death, such public safety personnel
202 satisfied the requirements of subdivision (1) of this
203 subsection; and

204 (b) Such public safety personnel died in the line of
205 duty.

206 9. The department shall provide a tuition award to
207 public safety personnel and legal dependents who satisfy the
208 provisions of this section and section 173.2660, if
209 applicable, and apply for an open seat at a public
210 institution of higher education, but shall not provide a
211 tuition award if doing so would require the institution to
212 create additional seats exceeding class, course, or program
213 capacity.

214 10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit
215 their applications to the department no later than December
216 fifteenth annually. No later than March first annually, the
217 department shall send written notice of the applicant's
218 eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and state
219 whether the application has been approved or denied. If the
220 applicant is determined not to be eligible for the tuition
221 award, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for
222 such determination. If the application is denied, the
223 notice shall include the reason or reasons for the denial.

224 11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement
225 the provisions of this section and section 173.2660. Any
226 rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in
227 section 536.010, that is created under the authority
228 delegated in this section shall become effective only if it
229 complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of
230 chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This
231 section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the
232 powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter
233 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove
234 and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional,

235 then the grant of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed
236 or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

237 12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury
238 the "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Fund", which
239 shall consist of moneys appropriated by the general assembly
240 or any gifts, donations, or bequests for the purpose of
241 implementing the provisions of this section and section
242 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the
243 fund. In accordance with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the
244 state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund shall
245 be a dedicated fund and money in the fund shall be used
246 solely by the department of higher education and workforce
247 development for the purpose of granting tuition awards as
248 provided in this section and section 173.2660.

249 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080
250 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end
251 of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the
252 general revenue fund.

253 (3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the
254 fund in the same manner as other funds are invested. Any
255 interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be
256 credited to the fund.

257 13. In any year in which moneys in the public safety
258 recruitment and retention fund are insufficient to fully
259 fund tuition awards for all eligible applicants, tuition
260 awards shall be awarded in the following order of priority;
261 provided that, in the event of a tie in eligibility,
262 available funds shall be distributed on a pro rata basis:

263 (1) Priority class one shall include public safety
264 personnel, in the following order:

265 (a) Public safety personnel in departments located
266 wholly or partially in counties or cities not within a

267 county with the highest crime rate per capita, as determined
268 by the most recent uniform crime reporting statistics from
269 the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

270 (b) Public safety personnel with the most years of
271 service; and

272 (2) Priority class two shall include dependents of
273 public safety personnel, in the following order:

274 (a) Dependents of public safety personnel in
275 departments located wholly or partially in counties or
276 cities not within a county with the highest crime rate per
277 capita, as determined by the most recent uniform crime
278 reporting statistics from the Federal Bureau of
279 Investigation; and

280 (b) Dependents of public safety personnel with the
281 most years of service.

282 14. The tuition awards provided for in this section
283 and section 173.2660 are subject to appropriation. If there
284 are no moneys in the fund established in subsection 12 of
285 this section, no tuition awards shall be granted.

173.2660. 1. Each legal dependent who is a tuition
2 award recipient pursuant to the provisions of section
3 173.2655 shall execute an agreement as provided in this
4 section. Such agreement shall include the following terms,
5 as appropriate:

6 (1) The tuition award recipient agrees to reside
7 within the state of Missouri for a period of five years
8 following the use of the tuition award;

9 (2) Each year during the five-year period following
10 use of the tuition award, the tuition award recipient agrees
11 to file a state income tax return and provide a copy of such
12 tax return to the department to document that such recipient
13 still resides in the state of Missouri;

14 (3) If the tuition award recipient fails to annually
15 file a tax return to prove residency in the state of
16 Missouri for the five-year period following the use of the
17 tuition award or fails to remain a resident of Missouri for
18 the five-year period following the use of the tuition award,
19 the tuition award recipient agrees that the tuition award
20 shall be treated as a loan to such recipient, subject to the
21 following conditions:

22 (a) Interest shall be charged on the unpaid balance of
23 the amount received from the date the recipient ceases to
24 reside in Missouri until the amount received is paid back to
25 the state. The interest rate shall be adjusted annually and
26 shall be equal to one percentage point over the prevailing
27 United States prime rate in effect on January first of such
28 year; and

29 (b) The servicer of such loans shall be the higher
30 education loan authority of the state of Missouri created
31 pursuant to sections 173.350 to 173.445; and

32 (4) Any residency, filing, or payment obligation
33 incurred by the tuition award recipient under section
34 173.2655 is canceled in the event of the tuition award
35 recipient's total and permanent disability or death.

36 2. The five-year residency requirement begins once the
37 legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition award
38 for the first time and continues until the tuition award
39 recipient's:

40 (1) Completion of the five-year tuition award
41 eligibility period;

42 (2) Completion of a baccalaureate degree at a public
43 institution of higher education;

44 (3) Completion of an associate degree at a public
45 community college and notification to the department that

46 such recipient does not intend to pursue a baccalaureate
47 degree or additional associate degree using tuition awards
48 pursuant to the public safety recruitment and retention act;
49 or

50 (4) Notification to the department that such recipient
51 does not plan to use additional tuition awards pursuant to
52 the public safety recruitment and retention act.

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