

SENATE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
FOR  
SENATE BILL NO. 71  
AN ACT

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

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*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 dispatcher", as such term is  
12 defined in section 190.100;

13 (4) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is  
14 defined in section 190.100;

15 (5) "Firefighter", any officer or employee of a fire  
16 department who is employed for the purpose of fighting  
17 fires, excluding volunteer firefighters and anyone employed  
18 in a clerical or other capacity not involving fire-fighting  
19 duties;

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

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

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

32           (9) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section  
33 190.100;

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

41           (11) "Public institution of higher education", a  
42 public community college, state college, or state university;

43           (12) "Public safety personnel", includes any police  
44 officer, firefighter, paramedic, emergency medical  
45 dispatcher, emergency medical technician, or advanced  
46 emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized  
47 by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or  
48 treatment;

49           (13) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set  
50 by the governing body of a public institution of higher  
51 education, including fees such as course fees, activity  
52 fees, technology fees, and mandatory fees charged by such

53 institution to all full-time students as a condition of  
54 enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books,  
55 and any other educational materials, equipment, or supplies.

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

61 (1) Possesses one of the following:

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

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

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

73 (d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful  
74 completion of an emergency medical dispatcher course and any  
75 ongoing training requirements pursuant to section 650.340;  
76 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 emergency medical dispatchers, 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) 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 for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this  
241 section and section 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be  
242 custodian of the fund. In accordance with sections 30.170  
243 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements.  
244 The fund shall be a dedicated fund and money in the fund  
245 shall be used solely by the department of higher education  
246 and workforce development for the purpose of granting  
247 tuition awards as provided in this section and 173.2660.

248 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080  
249 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end

250 of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the  
251 general revenue fund.

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

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

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

264 (a) Public safety personnel in departments located  
265 wholly or partially in counties or cities not within a  
266 county with the highest crime rate per capita, as determined  
267 by the most recent uniform crime reporting statistics from  
268 the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

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

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

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

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

281 14. The tuition awards provided for in this section  
282 and section 173.2660 are subject to appropriation. If there

283 are no moneys in the fund established in subsection 12 of  
284 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.