

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE BUREAU

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE BILL NO. 78

Sponsor:

Printer's No. 43

1 Amend Bill, page 1, line 7, by striking out "further
2 providing for eligibility of scholarships" and inserting
3 establishing the Distance Education Program

4 Amend Bill, page 1, lines 10 through 20; page 2, lines 1
5 through 5, by striking out all of said lines on said pages and
6 inserting

7 Section 1. The act of January 25, 1966 (1965 P.L.1546,
8 No.541), referred to as the Higher Education Scholarship Law, is
9 amended by adding a section to read:

10 Section 8.5. (a) The Distance Education Program is
11 established in the agency to approve distance education programs
12 and to provide grants to students who enroll in approved
13 distance education programs.

14 (b) The agency shall administer and establish guidelines for
15 the distance education program. The agency may collect student
16 and school data to assess the performance of the distance
17 education program, provided that such collection complies with
18 the rights and responsibilities certification document of the
19 Pennsylvania State Grant Program as administered by the agency.

20 (c) An institution of higher education may submit an
21 application to the agency for approval to participate in the
22 distance education program. The application must be submitted in
23 such form and manner as prescribed by the agency.

24 (d) The agency shall review requests submitted under
25 subsection (c) and, if the institution meets the criteria
26 specified in the definition of "institution of higher education"
27 and "approved distance education program," shall approve the
28 request. The agency shall approve requests related to all
29 academic majors that are eligible under the State grant program.

30 (e) The agency may award, from funds appropriated, allocated
31 or otherwise made available to it, grants to students who are
32 enrolled in approved distance education programs at
33 participating institutions of higher education. The agency shall
34 establish a policy to ensure that awards are made in a
35 consistent manner throughout the award year.

1 (f) A student enrolled in an approved distance education
2 program shall submit an application for a State grant from the
3 agency. The application must be submitted in such form and in a
4 manner as prescribed by the agency.

5 (g) The agency shall review an application submitted under
6 subsection (f) and, based on available resources, if the agency
7 concludes that the applicant has financial need, may award a
8 State grant to the applicant to cover the cost of full-time or
9 at least half-time study in the approved distance education
10 program at an institution of higher education approved for
11 participation in the distance education program.

12 (h) A grant awarded to a student under subsection (g) may
13 not exceed per award year the amount the student would receive
14 under the State grant program for the same award year.

15 (i) This section shall apply to academic years 2013-2014
16 through 2017-2018.

17 (j) This section shall expire June 30, 2018.

18 (k) The following words and phrases shall have the meaning
19 given to them in this section unless the context clearly
20 indicates otherwise:

21 "Approved distance education program." A program of study
22 offered by an institution of higher education that is approved
23 by the agency and meets the following criteria:

24 (i) The program is at least two academic years in length.

25 (ii) Completion of the program leads to the attainment of a
26 recognized academic credential.

27 (iii) The program of study shall allow an eligible student
28 to take more than fifty percent of credits or clock hours
29 through distance education for each payment period in which the
30 eligible student is enrolled.

31 (iv) The program must be pursued by students on a full-time
32 basis or at least a half-time basis.

33 "Distance education program." The Distance Education Program
34 established by this section.

35 "Eligible student." A student who is otherwise eligible for
36 the State grant program, notwithstanding the distance education
37 requirements of the State grant program.

38 "Institution of higher education." A postsecondary
39 institution that participated in the State grant program as of
40 June 30, 2012, and is domiciled and headquartered with its
41 principal physical location in this Commonwealth.

42 "Physical location." A location with qualified on-site
43 administrative staff responsible for the overall administrative
44 operation of all educational activities, including, but not
45 limited to, instructional oversight, counseling, advising,
46 library services and maintenance of academic records.

47 "State grant." A grant or scholarship awarded under this
48 act.

49 Amend Bill, page 2, line 6, by striking out "in 60 days." and

1 inserting

2 July 1, 2013, or immediately, whichever is later.