

SENATE BILL NO. 71

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR GREGORY (15).

1178S.01H

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto two new sections relating to college tuition for first responders.

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 "First Responder
3 Recruitment and Retention Act".

4 2. For purposes of this section and section 173.2660,
5 the following terms mean:

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

8 (2) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is
9 defined in section 190.100;

10 (3) "Firefighter", as such term is defined in section
11 87.120;

12 (4) "First responder", as such term is defined in
13 section 67.145;

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

17 (6) "Line of duty", any action that a first responder
18 is authorized or obligated by law, rule, or regulation to

19 perform, related to or as a condition of employment or
20 service;

21 (7) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section
22 190.100;

23 (8) "Public institution of higher education", a public
24 community college, state college, or state university;

25 (9) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set
26 by the governing body of a public institution of higher
27 education.

28 3. A first responder shall be entitled to a waiver of
29 one hundred percent of the resident tuition charges of a
30 public institution of higher education if the first
31 responder:

32 (1) Possesses one of the following:

33 (a) A current, valid license issued by the department
34 of health and senior services authorizing such person to
35 serve as an emergency medical technician, advanced emergency
36 medical technician, or paramedic;

37 (b) A current, valid license issued by the peace
38 officer standards and training commission authorizing such
39 person to serve as a peace officer pursuant to the
40 provisions of chapter 590;

41 (c) A current, valid certificate issued by the
42 division of fire safety authorizing such person to serve as
43 a firefighter;

44 (d) A current, valid license issued by the state board
45 of nursing authorizing such person to engage in the practice
46 of professional nursing pursuant to the provisions of
47 chapter 335;

48 (e) A current, valid license issued by the board of
49 healing arts authorizing such person to practice medicine
50 pursuant to the provisions of chapter 334;

51 (f) Any other current, valid license or certification
52 that is required for such first responder's employment; or

53 (g) For first responders who are employed in a
54 position that does not require a license or certificate
55 described in paragraphs (a) to (f) of this subdivision, the
56 certificate of verification described in paragraph (h) of
57 this subdivision; and

58 (h) For all first responders, a certificate of
59 verification signed by the first responder's supervisor or
60 employer verifying that such first responder is currently
61 employed as a first responder who is trained and authorized
62 by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or
63 treatment;

64 (2) Meets all admission requirements of the public
65 institution of higher education;

66 (3) Pursues studies leading to a degree that relates
67 to a career as a first responder from an associate degree
68 program or a baccalaureate degree program;

69 (4) Submits verification of the professional license
70 or certificate, if applicable, and certificate of
71 verification required by subdivision (1) of this subsection
72 to the department of higher education and workforce
73 development, in a form and manner as prescribed by the
74 department of higher education and workforce development; and

75 (5) Files with the department of higher education and
76 workforce development documentation showing proof of
77 employment as a first responder and proof of residence in
78 Missouri each year such first responder or such first
79 responder's legal dependent applies for and receives the
80 tuition waiver.

81 4. A first responder may receive the tuition waiver
82 pursuant to subsection 3 of this section for up to five

83 years if he or she otherwise continues to be eligible for
84 the tuition waiver. The five years of tuition waiver
85 eligibility starts once the first responder applies for and
86 receives the tuition waiver for the first time and is
87 available to such first responder for the next five
88 consecutive years.

89 5. A legal dependent of a first responder who
90 satisfies the provisions of subsection 3 of this section
91 shall be entitled to a tuition waiver of one hundred percent
92 of the resident tuition charges of any public institution of
93 higher education for an associate or baccalaureate degree
94 program if the legal dependent:

95 (1) Executes an agreement with such institution in
96 accordance with the provisions of section 173.2660;

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

98 (3) Meets all admission requirements of the public
99 institution of higher education;

100 (4) Completes and submits to the United States
101 Department of Education a Free Application for Federal
102 Student Aid;

103 (5) Submits a document to the public institution of
104 higher education confirming that the legal dependent has
105 satisfied subdivision (4) of this subsection, to be
106 submitted in a form and manner as prescribed by the public
107 institution of higher education; and

108 (6) Submits the verification required pursuant to
109 subsection 8 of this section to the public institution of
110 higher education.

111 6. A legal dependent may receive the tuition waiver
112 for up to five years if the first responder and the legal
113 dependent continue to be eligible for such tuition waiver.
114 The five years of tuition waiver eligibility starts once the

115 legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition waiver
116 for the first time and is available to such legal dependent
117 for the next five consecutive years.

118 7. The public institution of higher education shall
119 waive one hundred percent of the first responder's or the
120 legal dependent's tuition remaining due after subtracting
121 awarded federal financial aid grants and state scholarships
122 and grants for an eligible first responder or legal
123 dependent during the time the first responder or legal
124 dependent is enrolled. To remain eligible, the first
125 responder or legal dependent shall comply with all
126 requirements of the institution for continued attendance and
127 award of an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

128 8. (1) An application for a tuition waiver shall
129 include a verification of the first responder's satisfaction
130 of the requirements of subsection 3 of this section. The
131 first responder shall include such verification when the
132 first responder or the first responder's legal dependent is
133 applying to the public institution of higher education in
134 order to obtain a tuition waiver upon initial enrollment.

135 (2) The death of a first responder in the line of duty
136 which occurs after submission of an application for a
137 tuition waiver shall not disqualify such first responder's
138 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the
139 tuition waiver. In such case, in lieu of submitting the
140 certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1)
141 of this subsection, the legal dependent shall submit a
142 statement attesting that:

143 (a) At the time of death, such first responder
144 satisfied the requirements of subdivision (1) of this
145 subsection; and

146 (b) Such first responder died in the line of duty.

147 9. Within forty-five days after receipt of a completed
148 application for a tuition waiver, the public institution of
149 higher education shall send written notice of the first
150 responder's or legal dependent's eligibility or
151 ineligibility for the tuition waiver. If the first
152 responder or legal dependent is determined not to be
153 eligible for the tuition waiver, the notice shall include
154 the reason or reasons for such determination.

155 10. The department of higher education and workforce
156 development shall promulgate rules to implement the
157 provisions of this section and section 173.2660. Any rule
158 or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in section
159 536.010, that is created under the authority delegated in
160 this section shall become effective only if it complies with
161 and is subject to all of the provisions of chapter 536 and,
162 if applicable, section 536.028. This section and chapter
163 536 are nonseverable and if any of the powers vested with
164 the general assembly pursuant to chapter 536 to review, to
165 delay the effective date, or to disapprove and annul a rule
166 are subsequently held unconstitutional, then the grant of
167 rulemaking authority and any rule proposed or adopted after
168 August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

 173.2660. 1. Each legal dependent who is a tuition
2 waiver 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 waiver recipient agrees to reside
7 within the state of Missouri for a period of five years
8 following the use of the tuition waiver;

9 (2) Each year during the five-year period following
10 use of the tuition waiver, the tuition waiver recipient

11 agrees to file a state income tax return and provide a copy
12 of such tax return to the department of higher education and
13 workforce development to document that such recipient still
14 resides in the state of Missouri;

15 (3) If the tuition waiver recipient fails to annually
16 file a tax return to prove residency in the state of
17 Missouri for the five-year period following the use of the
18 tuition waiver or fails to remain a resident of Missouri for
19 the five-year period following the use of the tuition
20 waiver, the tuition waiver recipient agrees to repay the
21 public institution of higher education attended by such
22 tuition waiver recipient the amount of tuition that was
23 waived for such individual if the public institution of
24 higher education requests such payment on the dates and in
25 the amounts requested; and

26 (4) Any residency, filing, or payment obligation
27 incurred by the tuition waiver recipient under the first
28 responder recruitment and retention act is canceled in the
29 event of the tuition waiver recipient's total and permanent
30 disability or death.

31 2. The five-year residency requirement begins once the
32 legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition waiver
33 for the first time and continues until the tuition waiver
34 recipient's:

35 (1) Completion of the five-year tuition waiver
36 eligibility period;

37 (2) Completion of a baccalaureate degree at a public
38 institution of higher education;

39 (3) Completion of an associate degree at a public
40 community college and notification to the department of
41 higher education and workforce development that such
42 recipient does not intend to pursue a baccalaureate degree

43 or additional associate degree using tuition waivers
44 pursuant to the first responder recruitment and retention
45 act; or

46 (4) Notification to the department of higher education
47 and workforce development that such recipient does not plan
48 to use additional tuition waivers pursuant to the first
49 responder recruitment and retention act.

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