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SENATE BILL 595

45TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2001

INTRODUCED BY

Sue Wilson

AN ACT

RELATING TO CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT; ESTABLISHING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM TO ENCOURAGE CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION POSITIONS; ENACTING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CAREER SCHOLARSHIP ACT; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

Section 1. SHORT TITLE. -- This act may be cited as the "Early Childhood Career Scholarship Act".

Section 2. DEFINITIONS. -- As used in the Early Childhood Career Scholarship Act:

A. "academic year" means any consecutive period of two semesters, three quarters or other comparable units commencing with the fall term each year;

B. "approved program" means a program approved by the secretary of children, youth and families offered by a

1 state vocational school, community college or a branch of a
2 state university leading to a certificate, associate or
3 bachelor's degree in early childhood education, special
4 education or elementary education;

5 C. "award recipient" means a student awarded a
6 scholarship;

7 D. "commission" means the commission on higher
8 education;

9 E. "early childhood program" means a program in
10 the public schools or funded by the children, youth and
11 families department from federal or state funds that serves
12 children from newborn to eighth grade;

13 F. "eligible institution" means a state post-
14 secondary educational institution, including vocational
15 schools, community colleges or branches of state universities
16 offering a vocational certificate or associate degree for a
17 program in early childhood education, special education or
18 elementary education and state universities that offer
19 bachelor's degree programs in early childhood education,
20 special education or elementary education;

21 G. "employee" means a person employed by an early
22 childhood program for at least one year prior to receiving a
23 scholarship, who continues to remain employed during the
24 academic year for which the scholarship is awarded;

25 H. "scholarship" means an early childhood career

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1 scholarship; and

2 I. "state post-secondary educational institution"
3 means a post-secondary educational institution created by the
4 state or the federal government and located in New Mexico.

5 Section 3. CREATION OF SCHOLARSHIP. -- "Early childhood
6 career scholarships" are created to be administered by the
7 commission pursuant to the Early Childhood Career Scholarship
8 Act.

9 Section 4. CONDITIONS FOR ELIGIBILITY. -- To be eligible
10 to be an award recipient, a person shall:

- 11 A. be an employee;
- 12 B. be a resident of New Mexico and a citizen of
13 the United States or a person with a permanent resident visa;
- 14 C. be accepted for enrollment in an approved
15 program;
- 16 D. be enrolled in six semester hours of courses in
17 an approved program;
- 18 E. be pursuing a certificate or associate degree
19 from an approved program; and
- 20 F. have met any other criteria to be an award
21 recipient established by the commission after consultation
22 with the children, youth and families department.

23 Section 5. CONDITIONS FOR CONTINUING ELIGIBILITY. -- A
24 scholarship may be reawarded to an employee who:

- 25 A. has been an award recipient in the last

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1 academic year;

2 B. remains in good academic standing as determined
3 by the eligible institution; and

4 C. is enrolled in an approved program.

5 Section 6. AMOUNT OF SCHOLARSHIP. -- Award recipients
6 shall receive scholarships of seven hundred fifty dollars
7 (\$750) per semester or a maximum of one thousand five hundred
8 dollars (\$1,500) per academic year.

9 Section 7. DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS. -- Scholarships shall
10 be awarded for one academic year, but the funds shall be
11 disbursed at the beginning of each semester in which the award
12 recipient is enrolled in classes.

13 Section 8. AUTHORITY TO ADOPT RULES-- DISTRIBUTION OF
14 SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS. -- The commission may adopt rules necessary
15 to implement and administer the Early Childhood Career
16 Scholarship Act.

17 Section 9. TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS. -- A scholarship
18 is terminated if the award recipient:

19 A. withdraws from an eligible institution;

20 B. fails to re-enroll for a consecutive academic
21 year;

22 C. fails to take six semester hours per semester
23 in an approved program; or

24 D. substantially fails to comply with the rules
25 that the commission adopted pursuant to the Early Childhood

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1 Career Scholarship Act.

2 Section 10. APPROPRIATION. --

3 A. Six hundred thousand dollars (\$600,000) is
4 appropriated from the general fund for expenditure in fiscal
5 year 2002 to the following agencies in the following amounts
6 for the following purposes:

7 (1) to the commission on higher education,
8 four hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$450,000) to provide
9 early childhood career scholarships pursuant to the Early
10 Childhood Career Scholarship Act; and

11 (2) to the children, youth and families
12 department, one hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$150,000) to
13 publicize the early childhood career scholarships created in
14 the Early Childhood Career Scholarship Act and identify early
15 childhood, special education and elementary education workers
16 who do not have bachelor's degrees, who are eligible and
17 motivated to take advantage of that scholarship program.

18 B. Any unexpended or unencumbered balance
19 remaining at the end of fiscal year 2002 shall revert to the
20 general fund.