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SENATE BILL 789

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

INTRODUCED BY

Timothy Z. Jennings

AN ACT

RELATING TO EDUCATION; ESTABLISHING A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR
EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS WANTING TO BECOME TEACHERS; CREATING A
FUND; MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

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

Section 1. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] SHORT TITLE. -- This act may be cited as the
"Educational Assistant Scholarship Act". "

Section 2. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
enacted to read:

"[NEW MATERIAL] PURPOSE. -- The purpose of the Educational
Assistant Scholarship Act is to increase enrollment in the
state's public universities of individuals who are already

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1 working in the public schools as educational assistants and
2 would like to advance their careers and enter the profession of
3 teaching by becoming certified public school instructors. "

4 Section 3. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
5 enacted to read:

6 "[NEW MATERIAL] DEFINITIONS.--As used in the Educational
7 Assistant Scholarship Act:

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

11 B. "award recipient" means a student awarded an
12 educational assistant scholarship;

13 C. "commission" means the commission on higher
14 education;

15 D. "group underrepresented" means women,
16 minorities, the visually handicapped and the physically
17 disabled, ethnic minorities and other groups who have
18 traditionally been underrepresented in the profession of
19 teaching; and

20 E. "student" means a resident of New Mexico for the
21 purpose of tuition payment. "

22 Section 4. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
23 enacted to read:

24 "[NEW MATERIAL] SCHOLARSHIPS CREATED.--There are created
25 "educational assistant scholarships" that the commission shall

1 award and administer pursuant to the Educational Assistant
2 Scholarship Act. "

3 Section 5. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
4 enacted to read:

5 "[NEW MATERIAL] SCHOLARSHIPS-- AMOUNT AUTHORIZED. --
6 Scholarships shall be in an amount sufficient to pay for the
7 award recipient's tuition, required student fees and books for
8 an academic year. "

9 Section 6. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
10 enacted to read:

11 "[NEW MATERIAL] CONDITIONS FOR FIRST YEAR ELIGIBILITY. --
12 Priority will be given to New Mexico students who are members
13 of an underrepresented group and students with the greatest
14 financial need. A scholarship may be awarded to an individual
15 who:

16 A. is a citizen of the United States or has a
17 permanent resident visa;

18 B. is currently employed as an educational
19 assistant at a New Mexico public school;

20 C. has met the admission requirements and is
21 accepted for enrollment in a program of education studies
22 toward licensure as a teacher;

23 D. has complied with the rules for award of the
24 scholarship and the provisions regarding the administration of
25 scholarships adopted by the commission pursuant to the

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1 Educational Assistant Scholarship Act; and

2 E. agrees to work or teach in a public school in
3 New Mexico for at least four years. "

4 Section 7. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
5 enacted to read:

6 "[NEW MATERIAL] DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIP. -- An educational
7 assistant scholarship shall be awarded for a period of one
8 academic year. A scholarship may be renewed until the award
9 recipient has received four consecutive academic year
10 scholarship awards or until the recipient graduates from a
11 four-year institution, whichever occurs first. "

12 Section 8. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
13 enacted to read:

14 "[NEW MATERIAL] TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIP. -- An
15 educational assistant scholarship shall be terminated upon the
16 following:

17 A. withdrawal of the award recipient from the
18 institution or failure to remain at least a half-time student;

19 B. failure of the award recipient to achieve
20 satisfactory academic progress; or

21 C. substantial noncompliance by the award recipient
22 with the provisions of and the rules adopted pursuant to the
23 Educational Assistant Scholarship Act. "

24 Section 9. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
25 enacted to read:

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1 "[NEW MATERIAL] FUND CREATED. -- There is created in the
2 state treasury the "educational assistant scholarship fund".
3 The fund shall consist of all money appropriated to the fund
4 and any grants, gifts or bequests made to the fund. Money in
5 the fund shall be appropriated to the commission for the
6 purpose of providing scholarship awards to qualifying students
7 pursuant to the Educational Assistant Scholarship Act.
8 Disbursements from the fund shall be made only upon warrant
9 drawn by the secretary of finance and administration pursuant
10 to vouchers signed by the executive director of the commission.
11 Balances remaining in the fund at the end of each fiscal year
12 shall not revert."

13 Section 10. A new section of Chapter 21 NMSA 1978 is
14 enacted to read:

15 "[NEW MATERIAL] DISTRIBUTIONS OF SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS. -- The
16 commission may adopt rules for the distribution of educational
17 assistant scholarship funds and for carrying out the provisions
18 of the Educational Assistant Scholarship Act."

19 Section 11. APPROPRIATION. -- Seven million five hundred
20 thousand dollars (\$7,500,000) is appropriated from the general
21 fund to the educational assistant scholarship fund for
22 expenditure in fiscal year 2002 and subsequent fiscal years to
23 provide scholarships to those individuals working as
24 educational assistants in the public schools who want to become
25 teachers and who are eligible pursuant to the Educational

1 Assistant Scholarship Act to receive a scholarship award. Any
2 unexpended or unencumbered balance remaining at the end of a
3 fiscal year shall not revert to the general fund.

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