

HOUSE BILL NO. 140

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVES MCGUIRE, Wilson, Gara, Kerttula, Crawford

Introduced: 2/14/05

Referred: House Special Committee on Education, Health, Education and Social Services, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act establishing a tuition waiver and voucher program for eligible students who
2 were placed in foster care by the state; and providing for an effective date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** AS 14.43 is amended by adding new sections to read:

5 **Article 3A. Tuition Waiver and Fee Voucher Programs for Eligible Students Who Were**
6 **in Foster Care.**

7 **Sec. 14.43.087. Tuition waiver program and eligibility.** (a) A person
8 enrolled as a student in good standing in a state-supported postsecondary or vocational
9 education program is entitled to a waiver of undergraduate tuition of not more than
10 \$5,000 a year if the person was ordered committed to the custody of the Department of
11 Health and Social Services under AS 47.10.080(c) or AS 47.12.120(b)(3), was placed
12 in a foster home, and is otherwise eligible under (b) of this section.

13 (b) A person is eligible for a tuition waiver under (a) of this section if the
14 person

1 (1) applies on a form approved by the state-supported postsecondary
2 school or vocational program before June 30 of the year of attendance;

3 (2) is under 23 years of age;

4 (3) is recommended by the Department of Health and Social Services
5 on the basis that the person was 16 years of age or older while in foster care in the
6 state;

7 (4) is a resident of the state;

8 (5) is accepted for full-time attendance at a state-supported
9 postsecondary or vocational education program;

10 (6) has demonstrated financial need;

11 (7) has submitted a completed application for state and available
12 federal financial aid; and

13 (8) has submitted a completed application for at least one additional
14 scholarship.

15 (c) A maximum of 15 tuition waivers shall be granted each year by state-
16 supported postsecondary schools and vocational programs.

17 (d) A person who is granted a tuition waiver under this section is entitled to a
18 tuition waiver for eight semesters of attendance at a state-supported postsecondary
19 school or vocational program or until a degree is awarded, whichever first occurs, if
20 the person

21 (1) continues to be enrolled as a full-time student at a state-supported
22 postsecondary school or vocational program;

23 (2) maintains a grade point average of 2.0 or higher;

24 (3) complies with the code of conduct for the school or program; and

25 (4) meets state financial aid eligibility standards.

26 (e) A person who is granted a tuition waiver at a state-supported
27 postsecondary school or program may transfer the waiver to a different state-supported
28 postsecondary school or program if the person remains eligible for the waiver under
29 this section.

30 (f) An application for and documentation related to a tuition waiver that
31 identifies an applicant shall be maintained as a confidential record, and a copy of the

1 record may only be made available to the public after personal identifying information
2 is deleted.

3 (g) In this section, "tuition" means the charges imposed by a state-supported
4 postsecondary school or vocational program for enrollment at the school or program;
5 the term does not include other fees or the costs of books, housing, meals, and
6 transportation.

7 **Sec. 14.43.089. Fee voucher program and eligibility.** (a) In addition to a
8 tuition waiver under AS 14.43.087, a person enrolled as a student in good standing in
9 a state-supported postsecondary or vocational education program is entitled to a fee
10 voucher for undergraduate fees, housing, meals, and other education-related expenses
11 if the person was ordered committed to the custody of the Department of Health and
12 Social Services under AS 47.10.080(c) or AS 47.12.120(b)(3), was placed in a foster
13 home, and is otherwise eligible under AS 47.05.310(b).

14 (b) A state-supported postsecondary school or vocational education program
15 shall accept fee vouchers as though they were cash from an eligible student for
16 education-related expenses and, within 60 days after receiving a voucher, present the
17 voucher for reimbursement by the Department of Health and Social Services.

18 (c) The identity of a person presenting a voucher under this section is
19 confidential.

20 * **Sec. 2.** AS 47.05 is amended by adding new sections to read:

21 **Article 3. Postsecondary Education Support for Foster Children.**

22 **Sec. 47.05.300. Tuition waiver program.** (a) A person enrolled as a student
23 in good standing in a state-supported postsecondary or vocational education program
24 is entitled to a waiver of undergraduate tuition of not more than \$5,000 a year if the
25 person was ordered committed to the custody of the department under
26 AS 47.10.080(c) or AS 47.12.120(b)(3), was placed in a foster home, and is otherwise
27 eligible under AS 14.43.087.

28 (b) The department shall provide written notice of the eligibility criteria and
29 application procedure for the tuition waiver program to each person whom the
30 department placed in a foster home and who resided in a foster home until the person
31 was at least 16 years of age.

1 (c) At the request of a person who was sent a notice under (b) of this section,
 2 the department shall provide a confidential recommendation to a state-supported
 3 postsecondary school or vocational program.

4 (d) The department may adopt regulations necessary to carry out this program.

5 **Sec. 47.05.310. Education voucher program.** (a) An education voucher
 6 program is established in the department for the support of postsecondary education
 7 for persons who were ordered committed to the custody of the department under
 8 AS 47.10.080(c) or AS 47.12.120(b)(3) and placed in a foster home for at least six
 9 consecutive months. The program shall be funded through federal grant funds made
 10 available for that purpose.

11 (b) A person is eligible for a voucher under this section if the person

12 (1) submits an application on a form approved by the department
 13 before June 30 of the year of attendance at a state-supported postsecondary school or
 14 vocational education program;

15 (2) is under 23 years of age;

16 (3) was 16 years of age or older while in foster care in the state;

17 (4) is a resident of the state;

18 (5) is accepted for full-time attendance at a state-supported
 19 postsecondary or vocational education program;

20 (6) has demonstrated financial need;

21 (7) has a high school diploma or its equivalent; and

22 (8) has submitted a participant agreement and budget worksheet on
 23 forms provided by the department.

24 (c) A voucher provided under the program established under this section may
 25 only be used for payment of fees and costs of books, housing, meals, and other
 26 education-related expenses approved by the department for attendance at a state-
 27 supported postsecondary school or vocational education program.

28 (d) Applications and related documentation provided under this program are
 29 confidential.

30 (e) Vouchers provided under this program to an eligible person shall be
 31 prorated to cover eligible costs of as many persons as possible for eight semesters or

1 until a degree is awarded to the person, whichever first occurs.

2 (f) The department may adopt regulations necessary to carry out this program.

3 **Sec. 47.05.329. Definition.** In AS 47.05.300 - 47.05.329, "department" means
4 the Department of Health and Social Services.

5 * **Sec. 3.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).