

SENATE BILL NO. 43

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

Introduced: 1/19/11

Referred: Education, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act renaming the Alaska performance scholarship and relating to the scholarship
2 and tax credits applicable to contributions to the scholarship; establishing the Alaska
3 performance scholarship investment fund and the Alaska performance scholarship
4 award fund and relating to the funds; making conforming amendments; and providing
5 for an effective date."

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

7 * **Section 1.** AS 14.03.113, as enacted by sec. 1, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

8 **Sec. 14.03.113. District determination of scholarship eligibility.** A school
9 district shall determine whether a student who graduates from a high school in the
10 district is eligible for an award of an Alaska performance [MERIT SCHOLARSHIP
11 PROGRAM] scholarship under AS 14.43.810 - 14.43.849. If a student is eligible, the
12 district shall state in the student's permanent record the highest level of funding for
13 which the student is eligible. A district shall provide a student with an opportunity to

1 request that the district correct an error in the eligibility determination.

2 * **Sec. 2.** AS 14.43.810, as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

3 **Sec. 14.43.810. Alaska performance [MERIT] scholarship [PROGRAM]**
 4 **established; regulations.** (a) The Alaska performance [MERIT] scholarship
 5 [PROGRAM] is established to provide scholarships for high school graduates who are
 6 Alaska residents to attend a qualified postsecondary institution in the state.

7 (b) The department shall, in consultation with the commission, adopt
 8 regulations necessary to implement the scholarships [PROGRAM]. The commission
 9 shall administer the daily operations of the scholarships [PROGRAM] and financing
 10 of the scholarships [PROGRAM], including the procedures for applying for the
 11 scholarships, establishing standards for and ensuring continuing compliance with
 12 programmatic standards, and requiring students to apply for other nonloan financial
 13 aid, consistent with federal law.

14 * **Sec. 3.** AS 14.43.820(a), as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

15 (a) Subject to appropriation, the commission shall award an Alaska
 16 performance [MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM] scholarship to an applicant who

17 (1) is a resident of the state as defined in AS 01.10.055;

18 (2) graduated or will graduate within six months from a high school in
 19 the state;

20 (3) has completed a core academic curriculum in high school that
 21 includes

22 (A) four years of mathematics, four years of language arts, four
 23 years of science, and four years of social studies, one year of which may
 24 include a foreign language, an Alaska Native language, fine arts, or cultural
 25 heritage; or

26 (B) three years of mathematics, four years of language arts,
 27 three years of science, four years of social studies, and two years of a foreign
 28 language or an Alaska Native language;

29 (4) has a minimum grade-point average in high school of 2.5 or higher;
 30 the department shall set by regulation minimum requirements based on a substantially
 31 similar standard for districts that do not assign grades;

- 1 (5) has achieved a minimum score on a
 2 (A) college entrance examination; or
 3 (B) standardized examination designed to measure a student's
 4 level of preparedness to make the transition to work, as selected by the
 5 department; and
 6 (6) is enrolled in good standing in a course of study at a qualified
 7 postsecondary institution in this state that is intended to result in the award of a
 8 certificate or degree.

9 * **Sec. 4.** AS 14.43.825(a), as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

10 (a) The maximum annual awards for the Alaska **performance** [MERIT
 11 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM] scholarships are as follows:

- 12 (1) the first award level is \$4,755 and requires a 3.5 grade-point
 13 average or above and a very high minimum score on a college entrance examination;
 14 (2) the second award level is \$3,566 and requires a 3.0 grade-point
 15 average or above and a high minimum score on a college entrance examination;
 16 (3) the third award level is \$2,378 and requires a 2.5 grade-point
 17 average or above and a moderately high minimum score on a college entrance
 18 examination.

19 * **Sec. 5.** AS 14.43.830, as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

20 **Sec. 14.43.830. Qualified postsecondary institutions.** (a) The following
 21 institutions are qualified postsecondary institutions for purposes of awarding an
 22 Alaska **performance** [MERIT SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM] scholarship:

- 23 (1) a university or college physically located in the state that is
 24 (A) authorized to operate in the state under AS 14.48.020 or is
 25 exempt from authorization under AS 14.48.030(b)(1); and
 26 (B) accredited by a regional accreditation association;
 27 (2) a career and technical school program physically located in the
 28 state that has been included on a list of certified career and technical school programs
 29 received from the Department of Labor and Workforce Development; the commission
 30 shall publish the list on or before June 30 of the year preceding enrollment.

31 (b) The Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall, in

1 consultation with the Department of Education and Early Development, adopt
2 regulations under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) establishing criteria under
3 which the Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall certify career and
4 technical school programs in the state as eligible to participate in the Alaska
5 **performance** [MERIT] scholarship [PROGRAM].

6 * **Sec. 6.** AS 14.43.840, as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is amended to read:

7 **Sec. 14.43.840. Report to the legislature.** (a) To the extent permitted under
8 law, the department, the commission, the University of Alaska, and the Department of
9 Labor and Workforce Development shall share data necessary to prepare public
10 reports regarding the **scholarships** [PROGRAM].

11 (b) Not more than 10 days after the convening of each regular legislative
12 session, the department, the commission, the University of Alaska, and the
13 Department of Labor and Workforce Development shall present an annual report to
14 the public, the governor, and the legislature containing information of public interest
15 regarding the **scholarships** [PROGRAM], including

16 (1) the number of applicants and number and types of scholarships
17 awarded;

18 (2) the dollar amount of scholarships awarded in past years and the
19 dollar amount expected to be awarded for the next year; and

20 (3) data and trends in the data regarding high school and postsecondary
21 student performance, programmatic changes, and retention and graduation rates over
22 time.

23 * **Sec. 7.** AS 14.43 is amended by adding a new section to read:

24 **Sec. 14.43.845. Alaska performance scholarship award fund.** (a) The
25 Alaska performance scholarship award fund is established. The fund consists of
26 appropriations for Alaska performance scholarship awards under AS 37.14.750 -
27 37.14.790.

28 (b) The commission may use money in the fund to pay scholarships to
29 students under AS 14.43.810 - 14.43.849. Money appropriated to the fund may be
30 expended without further appropriation. Money appropriated to the fund does not
31 lapse. The money in the fund may be expended only in awarding scholarships under

1 AS 14.43.810 - 14.43.849.

2 * **Sec. 8.** AS 14.45.130(a), as amended by sec. 7, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is further amended to
3 read:

4 (a) A religious or other private school that elects to comply with AS 14.45.100
5 - 14.45.130 shall maintain permanent student records reflecting immunizations,
6 physical examinations, standardized testing, academic achievement, courses taken at
7 the school, and level of eligibility for an Alaska **performance** [MERIT
8 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM] scholarship under AS 14.43.810 - 14.43.849.

9 * **Sec. 9.** AS 37.14 is amended by adding new sections to read:

10 **Article 8A. Alaska Performance Scholarship Investment Fund.**

11 **Sec. 37.14.750. Alaska performance scholarship investment fund**
12 **established.** (a) The Alaska performance scholarship investment fund is established as
13 a fund of the state. The fund consists of

- 14 (1) appropriations to the fund;
15 (2) donations to the fund; and
16 (3) income earned on investments of fund assets.

17 (b) The commissioner of revenue shall manage the fund with the goal that the
18 purchasing power of the fund will not diminish over time without regard to additional
19 contributions that may be made to the fund. The commissioner shall invest the assets
20 of the fund in a manner likely to yield at least a five percent real rate of return over
21 time.

22 (c) Nothing in this section creates a dedicated fund.

23 **Sec. 37.14.755. Powers and duties of the commissioner of revenue.** In
24 carrying out the investment duties under AS 37.14.750 - 37.14.790, the commissioner
25 of revenue has the powers and duties set out in AS 37.10.071. The commissioner shall
26 provide reports to the Department of Education and Early Development, the
27 Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the Alaska Commission on
28 Postsecondary Education on the condition and investment performance of the fund.

29 **Sec. 37.14.760. Use of fund.** As soon as practicable after July 1 of each year,
30 the commissioner of revenue shall determine the average month-end market value of
31 the fund for the immediately preceding three fiscal years. The commissioner shall

1 identify five percent of that amount as available for appropriation by the legislature for
 2 appropriation to the Alaska performance scholarship award fund created under
 3 AS 14.43.845 from which the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education may
 4 award scholarships under AS 14.43.810 - 14.43.849. The commissioner shall also
 5 report as available for appropriation a running total of amounts previously identified
 6 as available for appropriation to the Alaska performance scholarship award fund but
 7 not appropriated.

8 **Sec. 37.14.790. Definitions.** In AS 37.14.750 - 37.14.790, unless the context
 9 requires otherwise,

10 (1) "commissioner" means the commissioner of revenue;

11 (2) "fund" means the Alaska performance scholarship investment fund
 12 established in AS 37.14.750(a).

13 * **Sec. 10.** AS 43.20.014(a) is amended to read:

14 (a) A taxpayer is allowed a credit against the tax due under this chapter for
 15 cash contributions accepted

16 (1) for direct instruction, research, and educational support purposes,
 17 including library and museum acquisitions, and contributions to endowment, by an
 18 Alaska university foundation or by a nonprofit, public or private, Alaska two-year or
 19 four-year college accredited by a regional accreditation association;

20 (2) for secondary school level vocational education courses, programs,
 21 and facilities by a school district in the state;

22 (3) for vocational education courses, programs, and facilities by a
 23 state-operated vocational technical education and training school; [AND]

24 (4) for a facility by a nonprofit, public or private, Alaska two-year or
 25 four-year college accredited by a regional accreditation association; **and**

26 **(5) for the Alaska performance scholarship investment fund under**
 27 **AS 37.14.750(a).**

28 * **Sec. 11.** AS 43.20.014(a), as amended by sec. 14, ch. 92, SLA 2010, is further amended to
 29 read:

30 (a) A taxpayer is allowed a credit against the tax due under this chapter for
 31 cash contributions accepted

1 (1) for direct instruction, research, and educational support purposes,
 2 including library and museum acquisitions, and contributions to endowment, by an
 3 Alaska university foundation or by a nonprofit, public or private, Alaska two-year or
 4 four-year college accredited by a regional accreditation association;

5 (2) for secondary school level vocational education courses and
 6 programs by a school district in the state; [AND]

7 (3) by a state-operated vocational technical education and training
 8 school; **and**

9 **(4) for the Alaska performance scholarship investment fund under**
 10 **AS 37.14.750(a).**

11 * **Sec. 12.** AS 14.43.849(4), as enacted by sec. 5, ch. 14, SLA 2010, is repealed.

12 * **Sec. 13.** Section 8, ch. 14, SLA 2010 is amended to read:

13 TRANSITION: **SCHOLARSHIP** [PROGRAM] STANDARDS AND
 14 IMPLEMENTATION FOR INITIAL SCHOOL YEARS. Notwithstanding any
 15 contrary provision of this Act, the Department of Education and Early Development
 16 and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, after consultation with the
 17 Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education, may adopt regulations under
 18 AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act) to implement their respective duties under
 19 the Alaska **performance** [MERIT] scholarship [PROGRAM] established in
 20 AS 14.43.810, enacted by sec. 5 of this Act, so that a student

21 (1) may be eligible for the **Alaska performance scholarship**
 22 [PROGRAM] even though the student did not fully meet the required core academic
 23 curriculum for the school years beginning July 1, 2010, through June 30, 2014; and

24 (2) who graduated from high school in this state after January 1, 2011,
 25 and before July 1, 2011, and meets eligibility requirements for the **Alaska**
 26 **performance scholarship** [PROGRAM] may apply for a scholarship on or after
 27 January 1, 2011, for enrollment in a program of study beginning on or after July 1,
 28 2011.

29 * **Sec. 14.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
 30 read:

31 REVISOR'S INSTRUCTION. The revisor of statutes is instructed to change the

1 heading of

2 (1) Article 12 of AS 14.43 from "Alaska Merit Scholarship Program" to
3 "Alaska Performance Scholarship";

4 (2) AS 14.43.820 from "Alaska merit scholarship program; eligibility" to
5 "Alaska performance scholarship; eligibility".

6 * **Sec. 15.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
7 read:

8 TRANSITION: REGULATIONS. The Department of Education and Early
9 Development, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of
10 Revenue, and the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education may proceed to adopt
11 regulations necessary to implement changes made to their respective authorities by this Act.
12 The regulations take effect under AS 44.62 (Administrative Procedure Act), but not before
13 July 1, 2011.

14 * **Sec. 16.** Section 15 of this Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

15 * **Sec. 17.** Section 11 of this Act takes effect January 1, 2014.

16 * **Sec. 18.** Except as provided in secs. 16 and 17 of this Act, this Act takes effect July 1,
17 2011.