**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**S. 908**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Senator Rankin

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Introduced in the Senate on January 9, 2024

Currently residing in the Senate

Summary: Extension of Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Awards and Life Scholarship Awards to Graduate Study

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 1/9/2024 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 79)

 1/9/2024 Senate Referred to Committee on **Education** (Senate Journal‑page 79)

 1/11/2024 Scrivener's error corrected

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**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[01/09/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/908_20240109.docx)

[01/11/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/908_20240111.docx)

A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑104‑20, RELATING TO THE PALMETTO FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM SO AS TO EXTEND BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM BEGINNING WITH THE SCHOOL YEAR 2024‑2025 TO ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE THEIR UNDERGRADUATE WORK IN FEWER SEMESTERS THAN AUTHORIZED FOR ELIGIBILITY; BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑149‑10, RELATING TO LIFE SCHOLARSHIPS, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT LIFE SCHOLARSHIPS MAY BE AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS AS INDICATED IN THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION’S REGULATIONS; BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑149‑10, RELATING TO LIFE SCHOLARSHIPS SO AS TO EXTEND BENEFITS OF THE PROGRAM TO ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS WHO COMPLETE THEIR UNDERGRADUATE WORK IN FEWER SEMESTERS THAN AUTHORIZED FOR ELIGIBILITY; BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑149‑30, RELATING TO FULL‑TIME ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENT FOR LIFE SCHOLARSHIP, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE BENEFIT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS; BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑149‑60, RELATING TO DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIP FOR THE LIFE SCHOLARSHIP, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE BENEFIT MAY BE AVAILABLE TO ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS AS INDICATED IN THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION’S REGULATIONS; AND BY AMENDING SECTION 59‑149‑90, RELATING TO ADDITIONAL DEGREES, SO AS TO INDICATE THAT ELIGIBLE GRADUATE STUDENTS MAY RECEIVE LIFE SCHOLARSHIPS FOR THEIR REMAINING PERIOD OF UNDERGRADUATE ELIGIBILITY.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 59‑104‑20 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding subsection (J) to read:

 (J) Beginning with school year 2024‑2025, if a student eligible to receive a Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Award pursuant to this section and Section 59‑104‑30 completes his undergraduate degree in fewer semesters than authorized to receive the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Award, the student may continue to receive the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Award for graduate study for up to the remaining number of semesters the student was eligible as an undergraduate to receive the Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Award. Full‑time enrollment as defined in Title IV of the Federal Higher Education Act is a requirement for eligibility. The student must be admitted, enrolled, and classified as a degree‑seeking undergraduate student or as an eligible graduate student. The Commission on Higher Education shall, by regulation, provide procedures for eligible students to apply for and receive a Palmetto Fellow Scholarship Award for graduate study.

SECTION 2.A Section 59‑149‑10(B) of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 (B) For purposes of this chapter, a “public or independent institution” which a student may attend to receive a LIFE Scholarship includes the following:

 (1) a South Carolina public institution defined in Section 59‑103‑5 and an independent institution as defined in Section 59‑113‑50.

 (2) a public or independent bachelor's or graduate level institution chartered before 1962 whose major campus and headquarters are located within South Carolina; or an independent bachelor's level institution which was incorporated in its original charter in 1962, was granted a license to operate in 1997 by the Commission on Higher Education, has continued to maintain a campus in South Carolina, and is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Institutions whose sole purpose is religious or theological training, or the granting of professional degrees do not meet the definition of “public or independent institution” for purposes of this chapter.

B. Section 59‑149‑10 of the S.C. Code is amended by adding subsection (F) to read:

 (F) In addition to the provisions of subsections (D) and (E), beginning with school year 2024‑2025, eligible resident students attending a graduate program at a public or independent institution as defined in this chapter may continue to receive a LIFE Scholarship for graduate study for up to the remaining number of semesters the student was eligible as an undergraduate to receive a LIFE Scholarship. The Commission on Higher Education shall, by regulation, provide procedures for eligible students to apply for and receive a LIFE Scholarship for graduate study.

SECTION 3. Section 59‑149‑30 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 59‑149‑30. Full‑time enrollment as defined in Title IV of the Federal Higher Education Act is a requirement for eligibility. The student must be admitted, enrolled, and classified as a degree‑seeking undergraduate student or as an eligible graduate student.

SECTION 4. Section 59‑149‑60 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 59‑149‑60. (A) The student may receive a LIFE Scholarship for not more than ten semesters for a five‑year degree program, eight semesters for a four‑year degree program, four semesters for a two‑year degree program, or six semesters for a three‑year degree program.

 (B) If a student completes an undergraduate program in fewer semesters than those authorized in subsection (A), the student may continue to receive a LIFE Scholarship for graduate study for up to the remaining number of semesters the student was eligible to receive a LIFE Scholarship as an undergraduate. The Commission on Higher Education shall promulgate regulations for students to apply for and receive a LIFE Scholarship for graduate study.

SECTION 5. Section 59‑149‑90 of the S.C. Code is amended to read:

 Section 59‑149‑90. (A) Students must not have been adjudicated delinquent or been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to any felonies or any second or subsequent alcohol or drug‑related offenses under the laws of this or any other state or under the laws of the United States in order to be eligible for a LIFE Scholarship, except that a high school or college student otherwise qualified who has been adjudicated delinquent or has been convicted or pled guilty or nolo contendere to a second or subsequent alcohol or drug‑related misdemeanor offense nevertheless shall be eligible or continue to be eligible for such scholarships after the expiration of one academic year from the date of the adjudication, conviction, or plea.

 (B) Regardless Unless otherwise provided by this chapter for graduate study, regardless of the number of hours attempted, once the student has earned a bachelor's degree, he is ineligible for a LIFE Scholarship to seek another degree.

SECTION 6. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor. Prior to the school year 2024‑2025, the Commission on Higher Education must promulgate initial regulations for extending eligibility for Palmetto Fellows Scholarship Awards and LIFE Scholarships for graduate study.

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