**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND SECTION 59‑26‑20, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO THE DUTIES OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION SHALL DEVELOP A SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR CERTAIN RESIDENTS THAT INTEND ON BECOMING CERTIFIED TEACHERS EMPLOYED IN THE STATE IN AREAS OF CRITICAL NEED; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑149‑10, RELATING TO THE LEGISLATIVE INCENTIVES FOR FUTURE EXCELLENCE (LIFE) SCHOLARSHIPS, SO AS TO PROVIDE FOR THE AMOUNT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP BASED ON THE STUDENT’S HOUSEHOLD INCOME; TO AMEND SECTION 59‑150‑370, RELATING TO THE SC HOPE SCHOLARSHIPS, SO AS TO INCREASE THE AMOUNT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP TO THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS AND TO PROVIDE THAT A STUDENT IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE HOPE SCHOLARSHIP IF HIS ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME IS LESS THAN SEVENTY‑FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS.

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

SECTION 1. Section 59‑26‑20 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately lettered item to read:

“( ) develop a scholarship program in which talented and qualified state residents may be provided up to seven thousand five hundred dollars annually to attend public or private colleges and universities for the sole purpose and intent of becoming certified teachers employed in the State in areas of critical need. Areas of critical need include both geographic areas and areas of teacher certification and must be defined annually for that purpose by the State Board of Education. The definitions used in the federal Perkins Loan Program serve as the basis for defining ‘critical geographical areas’, which include special schools, alternative schools, and correctional centers as identified by the State Board of Education. If after graduation the scholarship recipient does not become a certified teacher employed in the State in an area of critical need, then he shall repay the full amount of the scholarship plus interest to the State Board of Education in the same annual installments in which it was received.”

SECTION 2. Section 59‑149‑10 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding an appropriately lettered subsection to read:

“( ) Notwithstanding any other provisions of law, beginning with the 2021‑2022 School Year, the annual amount of a LIFE scholarship for eligible resident students is:

(1) five thousand dollars for a student whose household income is below sixty‑five thousand dollars;

(2) four thousand dollars for a student whose household income is between sixty‑five thousand dollars and seventy‑five thousand dollars;

(3) three thousand five hundred dollars for a student whose household income is between seventy‑five thousand dollars and one hundred thousand dollars;

(4) two thousand five hundred dollars for a student whose household income is between one hundred thousand dollars and one hundred twenty‑five thousand dollars; and

(5) two thousand dollars for a student whose household income is one hundred twenty‑five thousand dollars or more.”

SECTION 3. Section 59‑150‑370(A) and (C) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

“(A) SC HOPE Scholarships are hereby established and are provided by the State. These scholarships are authorized in an amount of ~~up to two~~ three thousand ~~five hundred~~ dollars, plus a three hundred dollar book allowance to cover the cost of attendance, as defined by the Commission on Higher Education by regulation, during the first year of attendance only, to an eligible student attending a four‑year public or independent institution as defined in subsection (B) who does not also qualify for a LIFE Scholarship or a Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.

(C) A student is eligible to receive a SC HOPE Scholarship if he meets the criteria for receiving and maintaining the Legislative Incentives for Future Excellence (LIFE) Scholarship except that a minimum Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) or ACT score and requisite class rank are not required for eligibility for the SC HOPE Scholarship, and his annual household income is less than seventy‑five thousand dollars. These SC HOPE Scholarships must be granted and awarded as provided in this section.”

SECTION 4. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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