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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 123

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 14 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR
HIGHER EDUCATION FOR YOUTH WHO HAVE BEEN IN FOSTER CARE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE:

1 Section 1. Amend Chapter 34, Title 14 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and
2 insertions as shown by underline as follows:

3 Subchapter XVII. The Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver

4 § 3431A. Purpose.

5 Under this subchapter, qualified students who spent part of their childhood in foster care will receive a tuition
6 waiver to attend State institutions of higher education. It is the intent and purpose of the General Assembly, through this
7 subchapter, to help ensure that young adults who experienced instability in their childhood and were in the state's foster
8 care system are provided the opportunity to improve their lives and pursue higher education regardless of financial
9 circumstances.

10 3432A. Definitions.

11 As used in this subchapter:

12 (1) "Department" means the Department of Services for Children, Youth & Their Families.

13 (2) "Eligible costs" means tuition and all mandatory fees relating to attendance at the institution. Where the
14 institution offers room and board to its students, eligible costs includes on-campus housing and a standard meal plan,
15 which shall be made available to waiver recipients year-round, so long as the waiver recipient is registered for a
16 sufficient number of credits in the spring and fall semesters to be eligible for on-campus housing.

17 (3) "Fostering independence waiver" or "waiver" means the Delaware Fostering Independence Through
18 Education Tuition Waiver Program established under this subchapter.

19 (4) "Institution of higher education" or "institution" means University of Delaware, Delaware State
20 University, and Delaware Technical Community College.

21 3433A. Delaware Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver Program.

22 (a) This subchapter establishes the Delaware Fostering Independence Through Education Tuition Waiver Program
23 (Program).

24 (b) Beginning in the spring semester of 2022, an institution of higher education shall award a fostering
25 independence waiver for undergraduate courses at the institution for each individual who is eligible under this section. The
26 amount of the waiver shall be total eligible costs of attending the institution, less any grants or scholarships the individual
27 receives. The waiver shall be awarded for up to 5 years if the individual is enrolled full-time.

28 (c) In order to receive a fostering independence waiver under this section, an individual must be a current resident
29 of this State, under the age of 27, and one of the following:

30 (1) Eligible for the Delaware Chafee Education and Training Voucher program.

31 (2) Spent 12 or more months in the custody of the Department when the individual was between the ages of
32 14 and 18.

33 § 3434A. Administration of the Program.

34 (a) Each institution of higher education shall designate an appropriate staff person as the point of contact for
35 students eligible for the Program. Contact information for the point of contact must be posted on the publicly accessible
36 internet website of the institution of higher education.

37 (b) The point of contact, and staff designated to assist the point of contact, shall do all of the following:

38 (1) Assist students in obtaining verification of eligibility for the Program from the courts, the Department, and
39 any other relevant agency.

40 (2) Assist individuals who are eligible for the Program to access available federal and state financial aid
41 resources and identify further scholarship and grant opportunities.

42 (3) Serve as the primary contact for all individuals eligible for the Program who are applying to or attending
43 the institution.

44 (4) Provide individuals eligible for the Program with information and referrals for on-campus support services
45 and resources, including admissions, housing financial aid, health, mental health, tutoring, career, academic advising
46 and other services.

47 (5) Provide individuals eligible for the Program with information and referrals for available off-campus
48 support services, including transitional housing and medical insurance and services.

49 (c) Each institution of higher education shall report by April 1 each year to the Controller General and the Office
50 of Management and Budget the number of students who are receiving a waiver pursuant to this subchapter.

SYNOPSIS

This Act supports children who spent part or all of their teen years in the State's foster care system to access higher education by providing a tuition waiver program to cover the cost of tuition, fees, and (where offered) room and board at a public Delaware college or university.