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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
151st GENERAL ASSEMBLY

HOUSE BILL NO. 249

AN ACT TO AMEND TITLES 14 AND 16 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO VOLUNTEER  
FIREFIGHTER TUITION REIMBURSEMENT.

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

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

3           § 3465. Volunteer Firefighter Educational Benefits

4           (a) For purposes of this section, "member" means as defined in § 6646 of Title 16.

5           (b) An active member is eligible for post-secondary education tuition reimbursement pursuant to this section under  
6       the following conditions:

7                   (1) The member must apply for tuition reimbursement in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated  
8       by the State Fire Prevention Commission.

9                   (2) Education benefits authorized by this section may be used only at a college or university within the State.

10                  (3) A member may be reimbursed under this program for only two classes or courses of instruction for  
11       undergraduate study or one class or course for graduate study each grading period. The classes will be reimbursed at  
12       100 percent of the tuition paid following the completion of the course with a grade of "C" or better.

13                  (4) A member must first apply for and utilize all other reasonably available tuition assistance programs,  
14       including scholarships, grants and civilian employer education benefit programs.

15           (c) This tuition reimbursement program is subject to the limits of the total funding appropriated by the General  
16       Assembly for this purpose.

17           (d) To receive tuition reimbursement for a post-secondary class or course of instruction authorized by this section,  
18       a member must do both of the following:

19           (1) Earn a grade no lower than a 2.0 on a 4.0 scale, or its equivalent, for each class or course of instruction for  
20           which the tuition reimbursement is granted. In any class or course of instruction for which a specific grade is not  
21           issued, the member must show documentation to verify satisfactory completion.

22           (2) Submit to the State Fire Prevention Commission within 30 days after completing a class or course of  
23           instruction proof of all of the following:

24                   a. Course title and grade received.

25                   b. Amount of tuition paid for the course.

26                   c. Name of the post-secondary institution where the course was taken.

27                   d. A letter from the chief of the member's volunteer fire department certifying the member is on active  
28           status.

29           (e) A member who ceases to be active or leaves membership will no longer be eligible for tuition reimbursement,  
30           but will not be required to repay any tuition reimbursement for any course completed in compliance with this section.

31           (f) The State Fire Prevention Commission shall include in the Commission's annual report all of the following:

32                   (1) The number of members who participated at each post-secondary educational institution during the year.

33                   (2) The total amount of tuition expenditures made pursuant to this section during the year.

34           (g) The State Fire Prevention Commission shall adopt rules and regulations necessary and proper for the efficient  
35           administration of this section. The rules and regulations must contain appeal procedures.

36           Section 2. Amend § 6604, Title 16 of the Delaware Code by making deletions as shown by strike through and  
37           insertions as shown by underline as follows and redesignating accordingly:

38                   § 6604. State Fire Prevention Commission — Powers and duties.

39                   The State Fire Prevention Commission shall have authority to:

40                   (10) Administer the volunteer firefighter tuition reimbursement program pursuant to § 3465 of Title 14.

#### SYNOPSIS

This Act creates a tuition reimbursement program for volunteer firefighters, similar to already existing programs for law enforcement officers and National Guard members. Pursuant to this program, active volunteer firefighters may be reimbursed for tuition for 2 undergraduate level courses or one masters level course per semester at any Delaware college or university. The State Fire Prevention Commission is charged with promulgating rules and regulations and administering the program.