

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
1999 Session

FISCAL NOTE

Senate Bill 228 (Senator McCabe. *et al.*)

Economic and Environmental Affairs

Maryland Science and Technology Scholarship - Credit Certificate Program - Eligibility

This bill adds students who are pursuing credit certificates to the pool of students eligible to receive Maryland Science and Technology Scholarships. Under current law a student must be pursuing an associate's or bachelor's degree to be eligible.

The bill takes effect June 1, 1999.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Minimal increase in general fund expenditures. No effect on revenues.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Fiscal Analysis

Background: The Maryland Science and Technology Scholarship Program was created by Chapters 566 and 567, Laws of Maryland 1998. Under the program, a scholarship is to be awarded to each student who meets the following qualifications: (1) has graduated from a Maryland secondary school; (2) has earned a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale in high school; (3) is a Maryland resident; (4) plans to enroll as a full-time student at a Maryland college or community college; (5) intends to pursue an eligible academic program in the field of computer science, engineering, or technology as determined by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC); (6) agrees to either work in the State after graduation for 1 year for each year that the scholarship was awarded or repay the funds received plus interest; and (7) satisfies any other criteria that MHEC may establish. Recipients must begin attending college within 2 years of completing high school. The

scholarship amounts are \$3,000 per year for students enrolled in 4-year institutions and \$1,000 per year for community college students.

The Governor's proposed fiscal 2000 budget includes \$5.12 million in general funds for the program, which comprises awards for an estimated 2,236 students and administrative costs. Annual costs for the program are projected to approach \$10 million by fiscal 2004.

State Effect: In fiscal 1998 approximately 101 freshmen enrolled full-time in science and technology credit certificate programs in community colleges. If this number of students were to each apply for and receive a Science and Technology Scholarship, scholarship costs would increase by \$101,000 in fiscal 2000. It is believed that only a small portion of credit certificate students would qualify for a scholarship, however, because:

- not all students have achieved a 3.0 GPA; and
- many credit certificate students are believed to be returning students who are not coming straight from high school (which makes them ineligible).

Therefore, it is expected that scholarship expenditures would not increase significantly as a result of this bill. It is further expected that MHEC could handle any additional administrative work resulting from the bill with existing resources.

Small Business Effect: Small science and technology businesses would benefit to the extent that this bill increases Maryland's supply of skilled workers in the fields of computer science, engineering, and technology.

Information Source(s): Baltimore City Community College, Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 15, 1999
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