

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 31 (Chairman, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee)
(By Request – Departmental – Higher Education Commission)

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

Ways and Means

Higher Education - Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program

This departmental bill expands eligibility for the Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program to include a student who attends any institution of higher education in Maryland that offers master's degrees in social work.

The bill is effective July 1, 2004.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill codifies existing practice.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: The Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

Analysis

Current Law: Maryland residents are eligible to receive graduate and professional scholarships if they demonstrate financial need and attend: (1) the University of Maryland schools of medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacy, or social work; (2) the University of Baltimore School of Law; (3) the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine; (4) the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine; or (5) any Maryland institution of higher education offering a master's degree in nursing.

Awards range from \$1,000 to \$5,000 per year, and recipients may not receive awards through the program for more than eight semesters. State funding for the program is allocated to eligible institutions of higher education, which then award scholarships to eligible students.

Background: The Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program was established in State law by the College Readiness for Disadvantaged and Capable Students Act of 2002. However, the program existed in guidelines adopted by MHEC prior to 2002. MHEC advises that its original guidelines included eligibility for students receiving master's degrees in social work from any institution of higher education in Maryland, but eligibility for these students was accidentally omitted from the College Readiness Act. This bill would make State law consistent with current practice.

The Graduate and Professional Scholarship Program has been funded with a combination of special license plate fees and general funds in recent years. The fiscal 2004 budget includes \$202,500 for the program, \$180,000 in special funds, and \$22,500 in general funds.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Maryland Higher Education Commission, Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 14, 2004
n/hlb

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