

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2007 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 318
Ways and Means

(Delegates McHale and Hammen)

Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs

Higher Education - Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program -
Eligibility

This bill expands eligibility for the Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program by eliminating the program's Maryland residency requirement for the child or surviving spouse of a State or local public safety employee killed in the line of duty.

The bill takes effect June 1, 2007.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Expanding eligibility for scholarships does not require additional spending, although general fund expenditures could increase beginning in FY 2008 to award scholarships to currently eligible students and an expanded population of eligible applicants. In FY 2007, the average award amount under the program is approximately \$5,400.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law: Only qualifying Maryland residents are eligible for the Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program.

Background: The Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program awards postsecondary education financial assistance to the following categories of students:

- the child of a member of the armed forces who died or suffered a service connected 100% permanent disability;
- the child of a member of the armed forces who was declared to be a prisoner of war or missing in action as a result of the Vietnam conflict;
- an individual who was a prisoner of war as a result of the Vietnam conflict;
- the child or surviving spouse of a State or local public safety employee killed in the line of duty;
- a public safety employee who is disabled;
- a veteran who suffers a service-related disability of 25% or greater and has exhausted all federal veterans' educational benefits; and
- the child or spouse of a victim of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The proposed fiscal 2008 State budget includes \$570,474 for the Edward T. Conroy Memorial Scholarship Program, which is equal to the fiscal 2007 appropriation of \$470,474 plus \$90,000 that was transferred into the program by the Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA). With the additional funds transferred to the program, OSFA advises that it has awarded Conroy scholarships to all 116 eligible applicants in fiscal 2007.

State Expenditures: Funding for Conroy scholarships is as provided in the annual State budget. Eliminating the program's residency requirement for the children and spouses of public safety employees killed in the line of duty would only result in increased expenditures if the State budget includes new funding to make awards to the additional candidates.

Assuming no growth in the average award amount from fiscal 2007 to 2008, general fund expenditures would increase by approximately \$5,400 per additional award in fiscal 2008. The number of additional awards that would be needed to serve all eligible applicants cannot be reliably estimated, but is not expected to be large. If five additional applicants qualify for awards, program costs could increase by \$27,000.

If eligibility for Conroy scholarships is expanded without additional funding, some candidates could be placed on a waiting list or the average award amount for the program could be reduced.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

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

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Analysis by: Mark W. Collins

Direct Inquiries to:
(410) 946-5510
(301) 970-5510