

1 AN ACT concerning higher education student assistance.

2 Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,  
3 represented in the General Assembly:

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act  
5 is amended by adding Section 55.5 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/55.5 new)

7 Sec. 55.5. Violent death or disability of police officer  
8 or fire officer education grant.

9 (a) Education grants shall be provided for any natural  
10 child, legally adopted child, or child in the legal custody  
11 of police officers and fire officers killed or permanently  
12 disabled, with 90% to 100% disability, in the line of duty as  
13 a result, directly or indirectly, of criminal acts of  
14 violence directed toward the officer or another person:

15 (1) while employed by or in the voluntary service  
16 of this State or any local public entity in this State;  
17 or

18 (2) in retaliation for the officer performing his  
19 or her official duties.

20 (b) Beneficiaries need not be residents of this State at  
21 the time of enrollment in order to receive this grant.

22 (c) Beneficiaries are entitled to full payment of  
23 tuition, room, board, book expenses, and mandatory fees  
24 incurred for grade school, high school, and 120 hours of  
25 undergraduate studies or the number of hours required for a  
26 college or university degree at:

27 (1) any State sponsored Illinois school or any  
28 institution of higher learning for either full or  
29 part-time study;

30 (2) any private school or institution in the State  
31 of Illinois at the rate established by the Commission; or

1           (3) any private, parochial, or other school or  
2 institution of learning the beneficiary is enrolled in or  
3 intended to be enrolled in at the rate necessary to  
4 complete the beneficiary's education through the college  
5 or university level; intent may be inferred from (i) the  
6 enrollment of brothers, sisters, or other family members  
7 in school and (ii) the education history of the parents  
8 of the student, and there is a presumption that the  
9 beneficiary would have continued in the same type of  
10 school system through the completion of a college or  
11 university education.

12           (d) Any grant under this Section is subject to the  
13 recipient being a student in good standing and maintaining  
14 satisfactory academic progress. If the recipient fails to be  
15 in good standing or maintain satisfactory academic progress,  
16 the benefits under this Section shall be suspended until such  
17 good standing and satisfactory academic progress are  
18 achieved.

19           (e) The recipient of any grant under this Section shall  
20 be limited to those children described in subsection (a) of  
21 this Section who were dependent on or were having their  
22 education paid by the officer or whose education the officer  
23 was legally responsible for at the time of the death or  
24 disability of the officer.

25           (f) The benefits under this Section shall expire upon  
26 the child attaining 25 years of age, unless the benefit  
27 period is extended for good cause for a period of no more  
28 than 2 years. In this subsection (f), "good cause" means  
29 reasons beyond the recipient's control that prevent the  
30 recipient from completing the education within the required  
31 time period.

32           (g) The benefits of this Section shall be administered  
33 by and paid out of funds available to the Commission and  
34 shall accrue to the bona fide applicant without the

1 requirement of demonstrating financial need to qualify for  
2 those benefits.

3 (h) Any person who causes the death or disability of an  
4 officer as described in subsection (a) of this Section shall  
5 be civilly liable to the State of Illinois for the  
6 anticipated costs of education grants under this Section.

7 (i) Civil liability may be imposed under this Section  
8 notwithstanding the fact that a criminal penalty may be  
9 imposed for the same conduct of the person.

10 (j) Any person convicted in criminal court of a criminal  
11 violation for the same acts that are the basis for an  
12 education grant under this Section shall be deemed to be  
13 civilly liable under subsection (h) of this Section. Any  
14 judgment entered under this Section is deemed to be a form of  
15 child support for the purposes of bankruptcy proceedings.

16 (k) This Section shall apply to any child of a deceased  
17 or disabled officer who qualifies under this Section for an  
18 education grant regardless of the date of death or disability  
19 of the officer.