

**The Florida Senate**  
**BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

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Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Higher Education

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BILL: SB 990

INTRODUCER: Senator Montford

SUBJECT: Bright Futures Scholarship Program

DATE: January 8, 2016

REVISED: \_\_\_\_\_

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Bailey	Klebacha	HE	<b>Pre-meeting</b>
2.			AED	
3.			FP	

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**I. Summary:**

SB 990 allows a high school graduate who is eligible to accept a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship award to defer the 2-year period for the initial award and the 5-year period for renewal until such time that he or she completes a full-time religious or service obligation lasting at least 18 months. In addition, the bill requires the organization to document in writing and verify the student's religious obligation or service work.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

**II. Present Situation:**

The Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program (program) is a lottery-funded scholarship program to reward a Florida high school graduate who merits recognition for high academic achievement and who enrolls in a degree program, certificate program, or applied technology program at an eligible public or private postsecondary institution in Florida after graduating from high school.<sup>1</sup> The Department of Education (DOE) administers the program in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the State Board of Education.<sup>2</sup>

The program consists of three types of awards:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sections 1009.53(1) and 1009.531(2)(a)-(c), F.S., specify that a student graduating from high school prior to the 2010-2011 academic year is eligible to accept an initial award for 3 years following high school graduation and to accept a renewal award for 7 years following high school graduation. Each student graduating in the 2010-2011 and 2011-2012 academic school years is eligible to accept an initial award for 3 years following high school graduation and to accept a renewal award for 5 years following high school graduation. In the 2012-2013 academic school year, and thereafter, a student graduating from high school is able to accept an initial award for 2 years following high school and to accept a renewal award for 5 years following high school graduation.

<sup>2</sup> Section 1009.53(3), F.S.

<sup>3</sup> Section 1009.53(2), F.S.

- Florida Academic Scholars (FAS);<sup>4</sup>
- Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS);<sup>5</sup> and
- Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (FGSV).<sup>6</sup>

To be eligible to receive a program award, a student must meet the general eligibility criteria for initial<sup>7</sup> and renewal awards.<sup>8</sup> The student must also satisfy specific eligibility criteria for each of the three award programs and complete a program of community service work.<sup>9</sup>

### **Student Eligibility Requirements**

Currently, a student who graduates from high school having met the requirements of a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship award is eligible to accept:

- An initial award for a period of two years;<sup>10</sup> and
- A renewal award for five years after graduating from high school.<sup>11</sup>

A student who enlists in the United States Armed Forces immediately after high school graduation can defer the 2-year eligibility period for initial award and 5-year renewal period of the award until the student separates from active duty.<sup>12</sup> Also, for a student who receives the scholarship award but discontinues his or her education to enlist in the United States Armed Forces, the remainder of his or her 5-year renewal period commences upon the date of separation from active duty.<sup>13</sup>

### **III. Effect of Proposed Changes:**

SB 990 modifies the student eligibility requirements for initial award of the Florida Academic Scholarship, Florida Medallion Scholarship, and Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholarship.

The bill allows a high school graduate who is eligible to accept a Florida Bright Futures Scholarship award to defer the 2-year period for the initial award and the 5-year period for renewal until such time that he or she completes a full-time religious or service obligation lasting at least 18 months.

In addition, the bill requires the religious or service obligation sponsoring organization to be classified as nonprofit status under s. 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or be a federal government service organization, such as the Peace Corps and AmeriCorps programs. The bill also requires the sponsoring organization to document in writing and verify the student's religious obligation or service work on a standardized form prescribed by the Department of Education.

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<sup>4</sup> Section 1009.534, F.S.

<sup>5</sup> Section 1009.535, F.S.

<sup>6</sup> Section 1009.536, F.S.

<sup>7</sup> Section 1009.531, F.S.

<sup>8</sup> Section 1009.532, F.S.

<sup>9</sup> Sections 1009.534(1), 1009.535(1), and 1009.536(1)(e), F.S.

<sup>10</sup> Section 1009.531(2)(c), F.S.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

In effect, a student that would otherwise forfeit a scholarship due to participation in a religious or service obligation may retain eligibility, similar to the flexibility currently granted to students who enlist in the United States Armed Forces.

The bill takes effect on July 1, 2016.

**IV. Constitutional Issues:**

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

**V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

**VI. Technical Deficiencies:**

None.

**VII. Related Issues:**

None.

**VIII. Statutes Affected:**

This bill substantially amends section 1009.531 of the Florida Statutes.

**IX. Additional Information:**

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Changes:**  
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

None.

- B. **Amendments:**

None.

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This Senate Bill Analysis does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill's introducer or the Florida Senate.

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