

STUDENT FINANCIAL AID

SB 1914 — Grants for Part-Time Students at Public Community Colleges and Universities

by Senators Klein, Sullivan, Wise, Lawson, Miller, Holzendorf, Geller, Rossin, Wasserman Schultz, Dawson, and Sanderson

This bill allows public community colleges and universities to award Florida Student Assistance Grants to part-time students.

This grant program is governed by s. 240.409, F.S., and is the state's major financial assistance program that is based on the student's financial need rather than academic merit. The individual colleges and universities administer the program and award a grant to each student who demonstrates need of \$200 or more. In 2000-2001, 11,742 part-time students were attending public colleges and universities.

Senate Bill 1914 amends substantive law to conform with the General Appropriations Act of 2001 and with the Senate budget bill for 2002-2003. The 2001 Legislature appropriated almost \$4 million for part-time students enrolled in public institutions. As of March 18, 2002, the Senate budget bill contains an appropriation of \$3,828,086 for student assistance grants for part-time students and provides that the appropriation is in accordance with SB 1914 but is not contingent upon the bill's becoming law (SB 2500, 1st Eng., Specific Appropriation 78).

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 37-0; House 118-0

NATIONAL GUARD/RESIDENCY/TUITION

CS/HB 7 — National Guard/Residency/Tuition

by Colleges and Universities Committee and Rep. Baker and others (CS/SB 128 by Appropriations Committee and Senators Pruitt and Crist)

This bill amends s. 240.1201, F.S., which classifies certain students as residents for purposes of tuition fees when attending a public community college or university. It provides that active members of the Florida National Guard, who qualify under s. 250.10 (7) and (8), F.S., for the tuition assistance program, are residents for tuition purposes.

The act is named for Sergeant Larry Bowman, a former Army minister and Lake County resident, who was killed on September 11, 2001, in the World Trade Center while assisting others to evacuate the building.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2002.

Vote: Senate 35-0; House 116-0

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

CS/CS/HB 1825 — Vocational Rehabilitation

by Lifelong Learning Council; Workforce & Technical Skills Committee; and Reps. McGriff, Murman, and others (CS/SB 2206 by Education Committee and Senators Mitchell and Sebesta)

This bill repeals the statutes that authorize the Occupational Access and Opportunity Commission and govern its administrative responsibilities. It designates the Department of Education as the agency authorized to receive and administer vocational rehabilitation funds from the federal government. It merges the membership of the Occupational Access and Opportunity Commission and of the Florida Rehabilitation Council and gives that council a stronger role in strategic planning and oversight of the vocational rehabilitation program.

In addition, the bill:

- Defines terms relating to vocational rehabilitation to conform with federal requirements.
- Requires the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to develop a new 5-year plan that organizes its priorities according to identified needs, including the priority for privatization.
- Requires the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation to assure that providers of direct services maintain quality-assurance and due-diligence regarding services.
- Renames the Rehabilitation Advisory Council the Rehabilitation Council and revises council membership and duties.
- Revises cross-references to conform the division's transfer to the Department of Education.
- Amends statutes to conform with the transfer to the Department of Health of the programs related to brain and spinal cord injuries and other trauma.

- Requires the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to conduct a review.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect upon becoming law.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 116-1

FIRESAFETY PREVENTION AND CONTROL

CS/HB 443 — Firesafety Prevention and Control

by Lifelong Learning Council and Reps. Barreiro, Heyman, and others (CS/SB 532 by Education Committee and Senator Silver)

The bill requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt uniform standards for educational facilities and a firesafety evaluation system for use as an alternate standard in existing facilities. It provides for enforcement of the standards and the alternate system and subjects the local fire official's decision about life-threatening deficiencies to review by the State Fire Marshal. The State Fire Marshal must ensure that the deficiencies are corrected or the facility is withdrawn from use. The State Fire Marshal must adopt and administer other rules related to the safety and health of occupants of educational facilities.

If approved by the Governor, these provisions take effect July 1, 2002.

Vote: Senate 36-0; House 113-0

