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An Act To Offer Tuition Waivers for State Higher Education Facilities to Eligible Veterans

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA c. 429-B is enacted to read:

CHAPTER 429-B

ADDITIONAL TUITION WAIVERS AT STATE POSTSECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

§ 12581. Definitions

As used in this chapter, unless the context otherwise indicates, the following terms have the following meanings.

- 1. Authority.** "Authority" means the Finance Authority of Maine.
- 2. State postsecondary educational institution.** "State postsecondary educational institution" means the University of Maine System, the Maine Maritime Academy and the Maine Community College System.

§ 12582. Eligibility criteria by category

The following categories of persons are eligible for tuition waivers under this section, as long as other criteria set out in section 12583 are met:

- 1. Veterans.** Persons who are veterans. The authority shall by routine technical rule adopted in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A establish a definition for "veterans" under this chapter.

§ 12583. Tuition waiver limitations

- 1. Eligibility of person.** A person is eligible for a tuition waiver under this chapter if the person:
 - A. Is a Maine resident;**
 - B. Is a high school graduate or has attained a high school equivalency diploma as described under section 257;**
 - C. Is accepted for admission to a state postsecondary educational institution; and**

D. Meets other eligibility criteria by category established in section 12582.

2. Limitation. The tuition waiver provided by this chapter is limited to a person who:

A. Is participating in an undergraduate degree program or certificate program of at least one year;

B. Has not been enrolled full time for more than 5 years or the equivalent; and

C. Has completed an application for federal student financial aid programs for which the person may be eligible.

3. Continuation. The tuition waiver provided by this chapter is awarded on a yearly basis and continues to be available, if the person is otherwise eligible under this section, as long as the person remains in good academic standing at a state postsecondary educational institution.

4. Revenue reduction. A state postsecondary educational institution shall absorb the reduction in tuition revenues that results from providing a tuition waiver to an eligible person under this chapter. The institution may not request additional General Fund appropriations from the Legislature to offset the reduction in tuition revenues.

§ 12584. Administration

1. Application. A person desiring a tuition waiver under this chapter may apply to the authority for determination of eligibility. Application must be on forms and in a manner prescribed by rule of the authority. Rules adopted pursuant to this chapter are routine technical rules as defined in Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A.

2. Decision. The authority shall determine whether an applicant is eligible and notify the applicant. The authority shall also notify the state postsecondary educational institution at which the person is accepted of the eligibility of that person for a tuition waiver. Unless notified by the authority of a change in the student's eligibility, the institution may not bill an eligible student for tuition during that school year.

3. Limitation. Tuition waivers to eligible persons are limited to a certain number of new students per year in each year at state postsecondary educational institutions in accordance with routine technical rules adopted by the authority in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375, subchapter 2-A .

SUMMARY

This bill establishes a tuition waiver for veterans at state postsecondary educational institutions. Under the bill, the Finance Authority of Maine will administer the tuition waiver program, as it currently does under the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 20-A, chapters 429 and 429-A. The authority is given rulemaking powers to define “veteran” and to establish how many tuition waivers are available each year at each state postsecondary educational institution.