

1 AN ACT relating to 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 32 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/32 new)

7 Sec. 32. Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship
8 program.

9 (a) As used in this Section:

10 "Eligible applicant" means a student who has earned the
11 Prairie State Achievement Award in all five academic areas,
12 as provided in Section 2-3.64 of the School Code.

13 "Qualified student" means a person (i) who is a resident
14 of this State and a citizen or permanent resident of the
15 United States, (ii) who has successfully completed the
16 program of instruction at any public high school located in
17 this State, and (iii) who enrolls or is enrolled in a
18 qualified institution of higher learning as an undergraduate
19 student and has not received a baccalaureate degree.

20 "Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship" means a
21 \$500 academic scholarship awarded under this Section during
22 an academic year to a qualified student, without regard to
23 financial need, as a scholarship to any qualified institution
24 of higher learning in which that student is or will be
25 enrolled as an undergraduate student.

26 (b) In order to encourage, promote, and reward the
27 academic achievement of students on the Prairie State
28 Achievement Examination, each qualified student shall be
29 awarded a Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship by the
30 Commission to any qualified institution of higher learning.

31 (c) No Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship

1 provided for a qualified student under this Section shall be
2 considered in evaluating the financial situation of that
3 student or be deemed a financial resource of or a form of
4 financial aid or assistance to that student for purposes of
5 determining the eligibility of the student for any
6 scholarship, grant, or monetary assistance awarded by the
7 Commission, the State, or any agency thereof pursuant to the
8 provisions of any other Section of this Act or any other law
9 of this State; nor shall any Prairie State Achievement Award
10 Scholarship provided for a qualified student under this
11 Section reduce the amount of any scholarship, grant, or
12 monetary assistance that the student is eligible to be
13 awarded by the Commission, the State, or any agency thereof
14 in accordance with the provisions of any other Section of
15 this Act or any other law of this State.

16 (d) The Commission is designated as administrator of the
17 Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship program. The
18 State Board of Education shall annually certify to the
19 Commission the names of students who are eligible applicants.
20 The Commission shall promptly notify those eligible
21 applicants so certified who are reasonably assured of
22 receiving a Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship, in
23 accordance with the annual funding levels recommended in the
24 Governor's budget, of their eligibility to apply for a
25 scholarship under this Section, other than any eligible
26 applicant named on the certification who, as an eligible
27 applicant, has previously made application to the Commission
28 for a Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship under this
29 Section. An otherwise eligible applicant who fails to make a
30 timely application, as determined by the Commission, for a
31 Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship under this
32 Section shall no longer be deemed an eligible applicant and
33 shall not qualify for the award of any Prairie State
34 Achievement Award Scholarship.

1 (e) All applications for Prairie State Achievement Award
2 Scholarships to be awarded under this Section shall be made
3 to the Commission on forms that the Commission shall provide
4 for eligible applicants. The form of applications and the
5 information required to be set forth therein shall be
6 determined by the Commission, and the Commission shall
7 require eligible applicants to submit with their applications
8 such supporting documents or recommendations as the
9 Commission deems necessary.

10 (f) The names and addresses of Prairie State Achievement
11 Award Scholarship recipients are a matter of public record.

12 (g) Whenever an eligible applicant who has completed the
13 program of instruction at any public high school located in
14 this State thereafter makes timely application to the
15 Commission for a Prairie State Achievement Award Scholarship
16 under this Section, the Commission shall promptly determine
17 whether that eligible applicant is a qualified student as
18 defined in subsection (a) of this Section. Each such
19 eligible applicant so determined by the Commission to be a
20 qualified student shall be awarded a Prairie State
21 Achievement Award Scholarship in the amount of \$500,
22 effective exclusively during the academic year following the
23 qualified student's high school graduation, subject to
24 appropriation by the General Assembly.

25 (h) Subject to a separate appropriation for purposes of
26 this Section, payment of any Prairie State Achievement Award
27 Scholarship awarded under this Section shall be determined
28 exclusively by the Commission. All scholarship funds
29 distributed in accordance with this subsection (h) shall be
30 paid to the qualified institution of higher learning and used
31 only for payment of the educational expenses incurred by the
32 student in connection with his or her attendance as an
33 undergraduate student at that institution, including but not
34 limited to tuition and fees, room and board, books and

1 supplies, and travel and personal expenses related to the
2 student's attendance at that institution. Any Prairie State
3 Achievement Award Scholarship awarded under this Section
4 shall be applicable to 2 semesters or 3 quarters of
5 enrollment. Should a qualified student withdraw from
6 enrollment prior to completion of the first semester or
7 quarter for which the Prairie State Achievement Award
8 Scholarship is applicable, the student shall refund to the
9 Commission the amount of the scholarship received.

10 (i) The Commission shall administer the Prairie State
11 Achievement Award Scholarship program established by this
12 Section and shall make all necessary and proper rules, not
13 inconsistent with this Section, for its effective
14 implementation.

15 (j) When an appropriation to the Commission for purposes
16 of this Section is insufficient to provide scholarships to
17 all qualified students, the Commission shall allocate the
18 appropriation in accordance with this subsection (j). If
19 funds are insufficient to provide all qualified students with
20 a scholarship as authorized by subsection (g) of this
21 Section, the Commission shall allocate the scholarships to
22 qualified students in order of decreasing percentile as
23 determined by the eligible applicant's cumulative grade point
24 average.

25 Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect on
26 July 1, 2001.