

SENATE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
FOR
SENATE BILL NO. 71
AN ACT

To amend chapter 173, RSMo, by adding thereto two new sections relating to college tuition for public safety personnel.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Missouri, as follows:

Section A. Chapter 173, RSMo, is amended by adding thereto
2 two new sections, to be known as sections 173.2655 and 173.2660,
3 to read as follows:

173.2655. 1. This section and section 173.2660 shall
2 be known and may be cited as the "Public Safety Recruitment
3 and Retention Act".

4 2. For purposes of this section and section 173.2660,
5 unless the context clearly indicates otherwise, the
6 following terms mean:

7 (1) "Advanced emergency medical technician", as such
8 term is defined in section 190.100;

9 (2) "Department", the department of higher education
10 and workforce development;

11 (3) "Emergency medical dispatcher", as such term is
12 defined in section 190.100;

13 (4) "Emergency medical technician", as such term is
14 defined in section 190.100;

15 (5) "Firefighter", any officer or employee of a fire
16 department who is employed for the purpose of fighting
17 fires, excluding volunteer firefighters and anyone employed
18 in a clerical or other capacity not involving fire-fighting
19 duties;

20 (6) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the
21 United States Department of Education for purposes of the
22 Free Application for Student Financial Aid;

23 (7) "Line of duty", any action that public safety
24 personnel is authorized or obligated by law, rule, or
25 regulation to perform, related to or as a condition of
26 employment or service;

27 (8) "Open seat", a vacant position in a class, course,
28 or program that is available for enrollment, and which may
29 become available when a student drops out or transfers, or
30 when a class, course, or program has unused capacity,
31 allowing new students to register or enroll;

32 (9) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section
33 190.100;

34 (10) "Police officer", any person who, by virtue of
35 office or public employment, is vested by law with the power
36 and duty to make arrests for violation of the laws of the
37 state of Missouri or ordinances of any municipality thereof,
38 while acting within the scope of his or her authority as an
39 employee of a public law enforcement agency, as such term is
40 defined in section 590.1040;

41 (11) "Public institution of higher education", a
42 public community college, state college, or state university;

43 (12) "Public safety personnel", includes any police
44 officer, firefighter, paramedic, emergency medical
45 dispatcher, emergency medical technician, or advanced
46 emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized
47 by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or
48 treatment;

49 (13) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set
50 by the governing body of a public institution of higher
51 education, including fees such as course fees, activity
52 fees, technology fees, and mandatory fees charged by such

institution to all full-time students as a condition of enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books, and any other educational materials, equipment, or supplies.

3. Subject to appropriation, public safety personnel with at least six years of service shall be entitled to an award worth up to one hundred percent of the resident tuition charges of a public institution of higher education if the individual:

(1) Possesses one of the following:

(a) A current, valid license issued by the department of health and senior services authorizing such person to serve as an emergency medical technician, advanced emergency medical technician, or paramedic;

(b) A current, valid license issued by the peace officer standards and training commission authorizing such person to serve as a peace officer pursuant to the provisions of chapter 590;

(c) A current, valid certificate issued by the division of fire safety authorizing such person to serve as a firefighter; or

(d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful completion of an emergency medical dispatcher course and any ongoing training requirements pursuant to section 650.340; and

(e) For all public safety personnel, a certificate of verification signed by the individual's supervisor or employer verifying that such individual is currently employed full-time as public safety personnel and trained and authorized by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or treatment;

(2) Meets all admission requirements of the public institution of higher education;

(3) Has not already earned a baccalaureate degree;

86 (4) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or
87 baccalaureate degree in one of the following academic
88 subject areas:

89 (a) For police officers, eligible subjects include
90 forensic science, fisheries and wildlife, political science,
91 psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology,
92 global studies, Spanish, journalism, advertising, public
93 relations, nutrition and health sciences, communication
94 sciences and disorders, and criminal justice;

95 (b) For firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical
96 technicians, and advanced emergency medical technicians,
97 eligible subjects include biology, chemistry, biochemistry,
98 microbiology, nutrition and health sciences, communication
99 sciences and disorders, Spanish, advertising, public
100 relations, paramedicine, fire science, fire technology, fire
101 administration, fire management, communications, homeland
102 security, emergency management, disaster management, and
103 crisis management; and

104 (c) For emergency medical dispatchers, eligible
105 subjects include any subject specified in paragraph (a) or
106 (b) of this subdivision;

107 (5) Submits verification of the professional license
108 or certificate and the certificate of verification required
109 by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the department, in
110 a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

111 (6) Files with the department documentation showing
112 proof of employment as public safety personnel and proof of
113 residence in Missouri each year such individual or such
114 individual's legal dependent applies for and receives the
115 tuition award;

116 (7) First applies for all other forms of federal and
117 state student financial aid before applying for a tuition
118 award, including, but not limited to, filing the United

States Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et seq.; and

(8) Submits a document to the department confirming that the public safety personnel has satisfied the provisions of subdivision (7) of this subsection, to be submitted in a form and manner as prescribed by the department.

4. Public safety personnel may receive the tuition award pursuant to subsection 3 of this section for up to five years if they otherwise continue to be eligible for the tuition award. The five years of tuition award eligibility starts once the individual applies for and receives the tuition award for the first time and is available to such individual for the next five consecutive years or the individual's achievement of one hundred twenty credit hours, whichever occurs first.

5. Subject to appropriation, a legal dependent of public safety personnel with at least ten years of service shall be entitled to a tuition award worth up to one hundred percent of the resident tuition charges of any public institution of higher education for an associate or baccalaureate degree program if such public safety personnel satisfies the provisions of subdivisions (1), (5), and (6) of subsection 3 of this section and the legal dependent:

(1) Executes an agreement with the department in accordance with the provisions of section 173.2660;

(2) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree;

(3) Meets all admission requirements of the public institution of higher education;

(4) First applies for all other forms of federal and state student financial aid before applying for a tuition

award, including, but not limited to, filing the United States Department of Education Free Application for Federal Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section 3301 et seq.;

(5) Submits a document to the department confirming that the legal dependent has satisfied subdivision (4) of this subsection, to be submitted in a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

(6) Submits the verification required pursuant to subsection 8 of this section to the department; and

(7) Pursues studies leading to an associate degree or baccalaureate degree in any one of the subject areas specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) subdivision (4) of subsection 3 of this section.

6. A legal dependent may receive the tuition award for up to five years if the public safety personnel and the legal dependent continue to be eligible for such tuition award. The five years of tuition award eligibility starts once the legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition award for the first time and is available to such legal dependent for the next five consecutive years or the legal dependent's achievement of one hundred twenty credit hours, whichever occurs first.

7. The tuition award shall be worth up to one hundred percent of the public safety personnel's or the legal dependent's tuition remaining due after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and state scholarships and grants for the eligible public safety personnel or legal dependent during the time the public safety personnel or legal dependent is enrolled. To remain eligible, the public safety personnel or legal dependent shall comply with all

184 requirements of the institution for continued attendance and
185 award of an associate degree or a baccalaureate degree.

186 8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall
187 include a verification of the public safety personnel's
188 satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5),
189 and (6) of subsection 3 of this section. The public safety
190 personnel shall include such verification when he or she or
191 his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for
192 a tuition waiver.

193 (2) The death of public safety personnel in the line
194 of duty which occurs after submission of an application for
195 a tuition award shall not disqualify such individual's
196 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the
197 tuition award. In such case, in lieu of submitting the
198 certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1)
199 of this subsection, the legal dependent shall submit a
200 statement attesting that:

201 (a) At the time of death, such public safety personnel
202 satisfied the requirements of subdivision (1) of this
203 subsection; and

204 (b) Such public safety personnel died in the line of
205 duty.

206 9. The department shall provide a tuition award to
207 public safety personnel and legal dependents who satisfy the
208 provisions of this section and section 173.2660, if
209 applicable, and apply for an open seat at a public
210 institution of higher education, but shall not provide a
211 tuition award if doing so would require the institution to
212 create additional seats exceeding class, course, or program
213 capacity.

214 10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit
215 their applications to the department no later than December
216 fifteenth annually. No later than March first annually, the

217 department shall send written notice of the applicant's
218 eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and state
219 whether the application has been approved or denied. If the
220 applicant is determined not to be eligible for the tuition
221 award, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for
222 such determination. If the application is denied, the
223 notice shall include the reason or reasons for the denial.

224 11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement
225 the provisions of this section and section 173.2660. Any
226 rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in
227 section 536.010, that is created under the authority
228 delegated in this section shall become effective only if it
229 complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of
230 chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This
231 section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the
232 powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter
233 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove
234 and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional,
235 then the grant of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed
236 or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

237 12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury
238 the "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Fund", which
239 shall consist of moneys appropriated by the general assembly
240 for the purpose of implementing the provisions of this
241 section and section 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be
242 custodian of the fund. In accordance with sections 30.170
243 and 30.180, the state treasurer may approve disbursements.
244 The fund shall be a dedicated fund and money in the fund
245 shall be used solely by the department of higher education
246 and workforce development for the purpose of granting
247 tuition awards as provided in this section and 173.2660.

248 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080
249 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end

of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the
general revenue fund.

(3) The state treasurer shall invest moneys in the
fund in the same manner as other funds are invested. Any
interest and moneys earned on such investments shall be
credited to the fund.

13. In any year in which moneys in the public safety
recruitment and retention fund are insufficient to fully
fund tuition awards for all eligible applicants, tuition
awards shall be awarded in the following order of priority;
provided that, in the event of a tie in eligibility,
available funds shall be distributed on a pro rata basis:

(1) Priority class one shall include public safety
personnel, in the following order:

(a) Public safety personnel in departments located
wholly or partially in counties or cities not within a
county with the highest crime rate per capita, as determined
by the most recent uniform crime reporting statistics from
the Federal Bureau of Investigation; and

(b) Public safety personnel with the most years of
service; and

(2) Priority class two shall include dependents of
public safety personnel, in the following order:

(a) Dependents of public safety personnel in
departments located wholly or partially in counties or
cities not within a county with the highest crime rate per
capita, as determined by the most recent uniform crime
reporting statistics from the Federal Bureau of
Investigation; and

(b) Dependents of public safety personnel with the
most years of service.

14. The tuition awards provided for in this section
and section 173.2660 are subject to appropriation. If there

283 are no moneys in the fund established in subsection 12 of
284 this section, no tuition awards shall be granted.

173.2660. 1. Each legal dependent who is a tuition
2 award recipient pursuant to the provisions of section
3 173.2655 shall execute an agreement as provided in this
4 section. Such agreement shall include the following terms,
5 as appropriate:

6 (1) The tuition award recipient agrees to reside
7 within the state of Missouri for a period of five years
8 following the use of the tuition award;

9 (2) Each year during the five-year period following
10 use of the tuition award, the tuition award recipient agrees
11 to file a state income tax return and provide a copy of such
12 tax return to the department to document that such recipient
13 still resides in the state of Missouri;

14 (3) If the tuition award recipient fails to annually
15 file a tax return to prove residency in the state of
16 Missouri for the five-year period following the use of the
17 tuition award or fails to remain a resident of Missouri for
18 the five-year period following the use of the tuition award,
19 the tuition award recipient agrees that the tuition award
20 shall be treated as a loan to such recipient, subject to the
21 following conditions:

22 (a) Interest shall be charged on the unpaid balance of
23 the amount received from the date the recipient ceases to
24 reside in Missouri until the amount received is paid back to
25 the state. The interest rate shall be adjusted annually and
26 shall be equal to one percentage point over the prevailing
27 United States prime rate in effect on January first of such
28 year; and

29 (b) The servicer of such loans shall be the higher
30 education loan authority of the state of Missouri created
31 pursuant to sections 173.350 to 173.445; and

32 (4) Any residency, filing, or payment obligation
33 incurred by the tuition award recipient under section
34 173.2655 is canceled in the event of the tuition award
35 recipient's total and permanent disability or death.

36 2. The five-year residency requirement begins once the
37 legal dependent applies for and receives the tuition award
38 for the first time and continues until the tuition award
39 recipient's:

40 (1) Completion of the five-year tuition award
41 eligibility period;

42 (2) Completion of a baccalaureate degree at a public
43 institution of higher education;

44 (3) Completion of an associate degree at a public
45 community college and notification to the department that
46 such recipient does not intend to pursue a baccalaureate
47 degree or additional associate degree using tuition awards
48 pursuant to the public safety recruitment and retention act;
49 or

50 (4) Notification to the department that such recipient
51 does not plan to use additional tuition awards pursuant to
52 the public safety recruitment and retention act.