



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

May 12, 2010

College Scholarship Bill Heads to Governor

JEFFERSON CITY—The Missouri Legislature gave final approval today to a bill sponsored by Sen. David Pearce (R-Warrensburg) that among other provisions, equalizes Access Missouri scholarships for public and private universities and protects Bright Flight scholarships for military members.

For the Bright Flight Scholarship Program, which is a merit-based scholarship that encourages top-ranked Missouri high school seniors to attend approved Missouri colleges and universities, [Senate Bill 733](#) states that if a scholarship recipient cannot attend an approved institution because of military service, the student will still be able to receive the scholarship if he or she returns to full-time status within six months of completing military service.

“We had to make changes to the program so that military members would stop being penalized for their service when it comes time to receive college scholarships,” Sen. Pearce said. “If they fulfill the other requirements, their military commitment shouldn’t prevent them from being able to pay for school.”

In addition, the bill specifies that a student must be a Missouri resident to be eligible for a Bright Flight scholarship, and it expands scholarship eligibility to those who have received a GED, or completed a homeschooling program of study, secondary coursework through Missouri’s Virtual Public School, or any other academic program that satisfies the compulsory attendance law. Senate Bill 733 also provides that all students in the top 3 percent of Missouri ACT or SAT test-takers will receive awards prior to any student in the top 4 or 5 percent receiving an award.

The bill also changes and equalizes the financial aid amounts available through the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program, which is a need-based program designed to increase accessibility to a student’s school of choice. It maintains current aid amounts through the 2013–2014 school year, and adds new financial assistance amounts for the 2014-2015 academic year and beyond. Under the new aid amounts, a student attending a public two-year school would receive between \$300 and \$1,300, while a student attending a public four-year school, or an approved private school, would be eligible for an award of \$2,850 maximum and \$1,500 minimum.

“We are now providing a level playing field for public and private school students by offering them the same aid amounts,” Sen. Pearce said. “I want to thank the countless people who worked on this issue for more than a year to help make college an affordable reality for every Missourian.”

Senate Bill 733 now moves to the governor for signing into law.

###

Contact: Matt Michelson
(573) 751-2272