**This Week in the Missouri Senate:  
Digital Audio File Script on SB 997**

This week in the Missouri Senate, we review an omnibus higher education bill set to become law…

**Nat Snd / Runs :03 / OC: for their dependents.**

*“What this is is a scholarship program for their dependents.”*

[Senate Bill 997](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/bts_web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=26334489) has several components to it, including public service loan forgiveness, the ability for two-year colleges to offer post-secondary courses, the “Dual-Credit Scholarship Act” and other items that relate to higher education in Missouri.

The measure was first-debated on the Missouri Senate floor on March 1.

Sponsor, Sen. David Pearce of Warrensburg, told his colleagues the new law will also extend the [Wartime Veteran's Survivor Grant](http://dhe.mo.gov/ppc/grants/wartimevetsurvivor.php) program…

**Pearce 1 / Runs :18 / OC: be per semester.**

*“When we first passed this in 2008, there was a sunset, up until 2014. This will just extend that until the year 2020. And, what this does, it provides tuition for dependents of those who are either killed or disabled while serving our great country. There is tuition, and it cannot exceed what the normal tuition at the* [*University of Missouri*](http://missouri.edu/) *would be, per semester.”*

He adds there are requirements to be met for parts of this new law…

**Pearce 2 / Runs :17 / OC: well as books.**

*“Only a 2.5 GPA is required for this. This is for either an Associate or a Bachelor’s Degree, it is not for graduate students. And, it would not be for students who are going to be going onto the graduate program. The eligibility is determined by the* [*Missouri Veterans’ Commission*](http://mvc.dps.mo.gov/)*, and there’s also a cap on room and board, as well as books.”*

Also during floor debate, Sen. Jill Schupp of Creve Coeur told the sponsor she favors his idea…

**Schupp 3 / Runs :14 / OC: for four years.**

*“I agree with you, and — you know — I will tell you that my little story: My son, who is a Mizzou student — in the J-School — said he wanted to go an extra semester, beyond the four years. And, my husband said, “You know what? That is absolutely fine. Just know that we are paying for four years.”*

She also says this new law will benefit those who need more than four years to receive their degree, for whatever reason…

**Schupp 4 / Runs :18 / OC: be productive citizens.**

*“Quality students who are going to graduate, not in the four years we put into place. So, as we look for policy incentives to help those kids graduate, because that — at the end of the day — is really what we want, is for them to have a successful school experience, for them to graduate and for them to go out into the world and be productive citizens.”*

Where most new laws take effect on Aug. 28, there are varying start dates for all of the pieces that comprise Senate Bill 997.

Other education-related proposals set to become law include:

* [Senate Bill 620](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=22246437), which modifies composition of the [Career and Technical Education Advisory Council](https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/career-education/advisory-committee) and requires the council to establish minimum requirement for a career and technical education certificate;
* [Senate Bill 968](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=25586057), which modifies several provisions relating to higher education financial aid for members of the military and their families;
* [House Bill 1681](http://www.senate.mo.gov/16info/BTS_Web/Bill.aspx?SessionType=R&BillID=27468393), which exempts schools from provisions of law regulating proprietary schools.

And, remember, you can follow these and other issues facing the Missouri Senate by visiting our website: [senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov).

Reporting for the Missouri Senate, I’m Dean Morgan.