

# SENATE BILL NO. 1768

103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCED BY SENATOR BRATTIN.

7453S.011

KRISTINA MARTIN, Secretary

## AN ACT

To repeal section 173.2655, RSMo, and to enact in lieu thereof one new section relating to college tuition for fire service personnel.

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

Section A. Section 173.2655, RSMo, is repealed and one  
2 new section enacted in lieu thereof, to be known as section  
3 173.2655, 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 technician", as such term is  
12 defined in section 190.100;

13 (4) "Firefighter", any officer, **member**, or employee of  
14 a fire department, **fire protection district, or other fire-**  
15 **fighting organization of a political subdivision** who is  
16 employed for the purpose of fighting fires, [excluding

**EXPLANATION-Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in this bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.**

17 volunteer firefighters] and anyone employed in a clerical or  
18 other capacity not involving fire-fighting duties;

19 (5) "Institution of higher education", a public  
20 community college, state college, or state university  
21 located in Missouri; or an approved private institution, as  
22 such term is defined in section 173.1102, that chooses to  
23 accept any tuition award money pursuant to subdivision (2)  
24 of subsection 7 of this section; or an emergency medical  
25 services training entity accredited or certified by the  
26 Missouri department of health and senior services pursuant  
27 to the provisions of section 190.131;

28 (6) "Legal dependent", as such term is defined by the  
29 United States Department of Education for purposes of the  
30 Free Application for Federal Student Aid;

31 (7) "Line of duty", any action that public safety  
32 personnel is authorized or obligated by law, rule, or  
33 regulation to perform, related to or as a condition of  
34 employment or service;

35 (8) "Open seat", a vacant position in a class, course,  
36 or program that is available for enrollment, and which may  
37 become available when a student drops out or transfers, or  
38 when a class, course, or program has unused capacity,  
39 allowing new students to register or enroll;

40 (9) "Paramedic", as such term is defined in section  
41 190.100;

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

49           (11) "Public safety personnel", includes any police  
50 officer, firefighter, paramedic, telecommunicator first  
51 responder, emergency medical technician, or advanced  
52 emergency medical technician who is trained and authorized  
53 by law or rule to render emergency medical assistance or  
54 treatment;

55           (12) "Telecommunicator first responder", as such term  
56 is defined in section 650.320;

57           (13) "Tuition", the charges and cost of tuition as set  
58 by the governing body of an institution of higher education,  
59 including fees such as course fees, activity fees,  
60 technology fees, and mandatory fees charged by such  
61 institution to all full-time students as a condition of  
62 enrollment, but excluding the costs of room, board, books,  
63 and any other educational materials, equipment, or supplies.

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

69           (1) Possesses one of the following:

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

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

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

81 (d) A current, valid certificate confirming successful  
82 completion of any ongoing training requirements pursuant to  
83 section 650.340; and

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

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

92 (3) Has not already earned a baccalaureate degree;

93 (4) Pursues studies leading to a license or  
94 certification issued by a training entity accredited or  
95 certified pursuant to the provisions of section 190.131, an  
96 associate degree or baccalaureate degree in one of the  
97 following academic subject areas:

98 (a) For police officers, eligible subjects include  
99 forensic science, fisheries and wildlife, political science,  
100 psychology, history, philosophy, sociology, anthropology,  
101 global studies, Spanish, journalism, advertising, public  
102 relations, nutrition and health sciences, communication  
103 sciences and disorders, and criminal justice;

104 (b) For firefighters, paramedics, emergency medical  
105 technicians, and advanced emergency medical technicians,  
106 eligible subjects include biology, chemistry, biochemistry,  
107 microbiology, nutrition and health sciences, communication  
108 sciences and disorders, Spanish, advertising, public  
109 relations, paramedicine, fire science, fire technology, fire  
110 administration, fire management, communications, homeland  
111 security, emergency management, disaster management, and  
112 crisis management; and

113 (c) For telecommunicator first responders, eligible  
114 subjects include any subject specified in paragraph (a) or  
115 (b) of this subdivision;

116 (5) Submits verification of the professional license  
117 or certificate and the certificate of verification required  
118 by subdivision (1) of this subsection to the department, in  
119 a form and manner as prescribed by the department;

120 (6) Files with the department documentation showing  
121 proof of employment as public safety personnel and proof of  
122 residence in Missouri each year such individual or such  
123 individual's legal dependent applies for and receives the  
124 tuition award;

125 (7) First applies for all other forms of federal and  
126 state student financial aid before applying for a tuition  
127 award, including, but not limited to, filing the United  
128 States Department of Education Free Application for Federal  
129 Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial  
130 assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section  
131 3301, et seq.; and

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

137 4. Public safety personnel may receive the tuition  
138 award pursuant to subsection 3 of this section for up to  
139 five years if they otherwise continue to be eligible for the  
140 tuition award. The five years of tuition award eligibility  
141 starts once the individual applies for and receives the  
142 tuition award for the first time and is available to such  
143 individual for the next five consecutive years or the

144 individual's achievement of one hundred twenty credit hours,  
145 whichever occurs first.

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

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

156             (2) Has not previously earned a baccalaureate degree;

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

159             (4) First applies for all other forms of federal and  
160 state student financial aid before applying for a tuition  
161 award, including, but not limited to, filing the United  
162 States Department of Education Free Application for Federal  
163 Student Aid and, if applicable, applying for financial  
164 assistance pursuant to the provisions of 38 U.S.C. Section  
165 3301, et seq.;

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

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

172             (7) Pursues studies leading to a license or  
173 certification issued by a training entity accredited or  
174 certified pursuant to the provisions of section 190.131, an  
175 associate degree or baccalaureate degree in any one of the

176 subject areas specified in paragraphs (a) to (c) of  
177 subdivision (4) of subsection 3 of this section.

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

187         7. The tuition award shall be worth:

188         (1) Up to one hundred percent of the public safety  
189 personnel's or the legal dependent's tuition remaining due  
190 after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and  
191 state scholarships and grants for the eligible public safety  
192 personnel or legal dependent during the time the public  
193 safety personnel or legal dependent is enrolled. To remain  
194 eligible, the public safety personnel or legal dependent  
195 shall comply with all requirements of the institution for  
196 continued attendance and award of an associate degree or a  
197 baccalaureate degree; or

198         (2) In the case of tuition at an approved private  
199 institution, up to one hundred percent of the public safety  
200 personnel's or the legal dependent's tuition remaining due  
201 after subtracting awarded federal financial aid grants and  
202 state scholarships and grants for the eligible public safety  
203 personnel or legal dependent during the time the public  
204 safety personnel or legal dependent is enrolled, up to a  
205 maximum amount that is equal to the total cost of tuition  
206 and mandatory fees charged to a Missouri resident at the  
207 public community college, state college, or state university

208 with the highest combined tuition and mandatory fee cost in  
209 the state at the time a tuition grant is awarded, as  
210 determined by the department. A private institution that  
211 chooses to accept as a tuition payment any tuition award  
212 money pursuant to this subdivision shall not charge the  
213 recipient of the tuition award any tuition that exceeds the  
214 maximum combined tuition and mandatory fee cost as  
215 determined by the department prior to the application of the  
216 tuition award.

217       8. (1) An application for a tuition award shall  
218 include a verification of the public safety personnel's  
219 satisfaction of the requirements of subdivisions (1), (5),  
220 and (6) of subsection 3 of this section. The public safety  
221 personnel shall include such verification when he or she or  
222 his or her legal dependent is applying to the department for  
223 a tuition waiver.

224       (2) The death of public safety personnel in the line  
225 of duty which occurs after submission of an application for  
226 a tuition award shall not disqualify such individual's  
227 otherwise eligible legal dependent from receiving the  
228 tuition award. In such case, in lieu of submitting the  
229 certificate of verification provided for in subdivision (1)  
230 of this subsection, the legal dependent shall submit a  
231 statement attesting that:

232       (a) At the time of death, such public safety personnel  
233 satisfied the requirements of subdivision (1) of this  
234 subsection; and

235       (b) Such public safety personnel died in the line of  
236 duty.

237       9. The department shall provide a tuition award to  
238 public safety personnel and legal dependents who satisfy the  
239 provisions of this section and section 173.2660, if

240 applicable, and apply for an open seat at an institution of  
241 higher education, but shall not provide a tuition award if  
242 doing so would require the institution to create additional  
243 seats exceeding class, course, or program capacity.

244 10. All applicants for a tuition award shall submit  
245 their applications to the department no later than December  
246 fifteenth annually. No later than March first annually, the  
247 department shall send written notice of the applicant's  
248 eligibility or ineligibility for the tuition award and state  
249 whether the application has been approved or denied. If the  
250 applicant is determined not to be eligible for the tuition  
251 award, the notice shall include the reason or reasons for  
252 such determination. If the application is denied, the  
253 notice shall include the reason or reasons for the denial.

254 11. The department shall promulgate rules to implement  
255 the provisions of this section and section 173.2660. Any  
256 rule or portion of a rule, as that term is defined in  
257 section 536.010, that is created under the authority  
258 delegated in this section shall become effective only if it  
259 complies with and is subject to all of the provisions of  
260 chapter 536 and, if applicable, section 536.028. This  
261 section and chapter 536 are nonseverable and if any of the  
262 powers vested with the general assembly pursuant to chapter  
263 536 to review, to delay the effective date, or to disapprove  
264 and annul a rule are subsequently held unconstitutional,  
265 then the grant of rulemaking authority and any rule proposed  
266 or adopted after August 28, 2025, shall be invalid and void.

267 12. (1) There is hereby created in the state treasury  
268 the "Public Safety Recruitment and Retention Fund", which  
269 shall consist of moneys appropriated by the general assembly  
270 or any gifts, donations, or bequests for the purpose of  
271 implementing the provisions of this section and section

272 173.2660. The state treasurer shall be custodian of the  
273 fund. In accordance with sections 30.170 and 30.180, the  
274 state treasurer may approve disbursements. The fund shall  
275 be a dedicated fund and money in the fund shall be used  
276 solely by the department of higher education and workforce  
277 development for the purpose of granting tuition awards as  
278 provided in this section and section 173.2660.

279 (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of section 33.080  
280 to the contrary, any moneys remaining in the fund at the end  
281 of the biennium shall not revert to the credit of the  
282 general revenue fund.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

312 14. The tuition awards provided for in this section  
313 and section 173.2660 are subject to appropriation. If there  
314 are no moneys in the fund established in subsection 12 of  
315 this section, no tuition awards shall be granted.

✓