




Senate Fiscal Agency
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BILL ANALYSIS

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Senate Bill 625 (Substitute S-1 as reported by the Committee of the Whole)
Senate Bill 626 (as reported without amendment)
Senate Bill 627 (as reported without amendment)
Senate Bill 628 (Substitute S-1 as reported by the Committee of the Whole)
Senate Bill 629 (as reported without amendment)
Sponsor: Senator Nancy Cassis (S.B. 625)
 Senator Gerald Van Woerkom (S.B. 626)
 Senator Jason E. Allen (S.B. 627)
 Senator Irma Clark-Coleman (S.B. 628)
 Senator Wayne Kuipers (S.B. 629)

Committee: Education

CONTENT

The bills would amend various acts to permit the State to award scholarship and grant money to college and university students enrolled in theology, divinity, or religious education programs. Currently, students pursuing these studies are specifically prohibited from receiving financial aid from the State. The acts to be amended are described below.

Senate Bill 625 (S-1) would amend Public Act 102 of 1986, which provides for grants to part-time, independent students with financial need.

Senate Bill 626 would amend Public Act 208 of 1964, which established a State competitive scholarship program to award scholarships to students with financial need and academic promise, based on their performance on a competitive exam.

Senate Bill 627 would amend the Legislative Merit Award Program Act, which requires the Michigan Higher Education Assistance Authority annually to award \$1,000 scholarships to students based on their performance on a national examination and without regard to their financial circumstances.

Senate Bill 628 (S-1) would amend Public Act 273 of 1986, which established the Michigan Educational Opportunity Grant (MEOG) Program to award up to \$1,000 per student per year to postsecondary schools to help eligible students meet educational expenses.

Senate Bill 629 would amend Public Act 313 of 1966, which provides for tuition grants to resident students enrolled in an independent, nonprofit college or university. The amount of the grant is based on financial need.

MCL 390.1283 (S.B. 625)
390.977 (S.B. 626)
390.1304 (S.B. 627)
390.1403 (S.B. 628)
390.994 (S.B. 629)

Legislative Analyst: Claire Layman

FISCAL IMPACT

The bills would have no fiscal impact on State or local government.

The State appropriations for most of these programs are included in the annual Higher Education appropriation act. The Legislative Merit Award Program has not been funded in the State budget since fiscal year (FY) 1980-81. For FY 2003-04, a total of \$105 million is appropriated for the financial aid programs affected by these bills. The funds for these programs are distributed primarily based on the amount of the State appropriation and the financial need of the student. The addition of theology and divinity as eligible programs for State financial aid grants would not require additional State appropriations, but depending on the number of newly eligible students, could lower the amounts available to currently eligible students.

Date Completed: 1-15-04

Fiscal Analyst: Ellen Jeffries