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AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION; INCREASING THE FAMILY INCOME
FOR ELIGIBILITY FOR THE NEW MEXICO SCHOLARS ACT SCHOLARSHIPS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO:

SECTION 1. Section 21-21H-1 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
Chapter 212, Section 1) is amended to read:

"21-21H-1. SHORT TITLE.--Chapter 21, Article 21H
NMSA 1978 may be cited as the "New Mexico Scholars Act"."

SECTION 2. Section 21-21H-3 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
Chapter 212, Section 3) is amended to read:

"21-21H-3. DEFINITIONS.--As used in the New Mexico
Scholars Act:

A. "academic year" means any consecutive period of
two semesters, three quarters or other comparable units
commencing with the fall term each year;

B. "award recipient" means a student awarded a
New Mexico Scholars Act scholarship;

C. "department" means the higher education
department;

D. "eligible institution" means any
degree-granting educational institution in New Mexico
accredited by the north central association of colleges and
secondary schools;

E. "satisfactory academic progress" means

1 completion of at least twenty-four credit hours per year and
2 maintenance of a cumulative grade point average of a minimum
3 of 3.0 or higher on a scale of 4.0; and

4 F. "scholarship" means a scholarship awarded
5 pursuant to the New Mexico Scholars Act."

6 SECTION 3. Section 21-21H-4 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
7 Chapter 212, Section 4) is amended to read:

8 "21-21H-4. CREATION OF SCHOLARSHIP.--There are
9 established "New Mexico Scholars Act scholarships"
10 administered by the department."

11 SECTION 4. Section 21-21H-5 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
12 Chapter 212, Section 5, as amended) is amended to read:

13 "21-21H-5. CONDITIONS FOR FIRST YEAR ELIGIBILITY.--
14 A scholarship may be awarded to a New Mexico high school
15 graduate who:

16 A. is a resident of New Mexico as determined by
17 the definition of residency for tuition purposes as
18 established by the department;

19 B. will graduate or has graduated from a
20 New Mexico high school and who enrolls in an eligible
21 institution by the end of the graduate's twenty-first
22 birthday;

23 C. has met the admission requirements and is
24 accepted for enrollment as a full-time undergraduate student
25 at an eligible institution;

1 D. has maintained a level of performance in high
2 school reflected by an overall score of at least twenty-five
3 on the American college test or SAT equivalent or a high
4 school class rank in the top five percent of the student's
5 high school graduating class in either the student's junior
6 or senior year;

7 E. has a total combined family income of no more
8 than sixty thousand dollars (\$60,000) per year adjusted
9 annually on January 1 to reflect any change from the previous
10 year's then-current consumer price index for all urban
11 consumers published by the bureau of labor statistics of the
12 United States department of labor in either of the calendar
13 years ending within the student's junior or senior years in
14 high school or in the case of a student whose immediate
15 family has more than one family member enrolled full time in
16 an eligible institution of post-secondary education, a total
17 combined family income of no more than an amount as
18 determined by the department to be equivalent to a
19 sixty-thousand dollar (\$60,000) total combined family income;

20 F. has complied with all the rules adopted by the
21 department for award of the scholarship and the provisions
22 regarding the administration of scholarships adopted pursuant
23 to the New Mexico Scholars Act; and

24 G. is a citizen of the United States or has a
25 permanent resident visa."

1 SECTION 5. Section 21-21H-8 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
2 Chapter 212, Section 8, as amended) is amended to read:

3 "21-21H-8. TERMINATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS.--A scholarship
4 is terminated upon the substantial noncompliance by the award
5 recipient with the New Mexico Scholars Act or the rules
6 promulgated by the department pursuant to that act."

7 SECTION 6. Section 21-21H-9 NMSA 1978 (being Laws 1989,
8 Chapter 212, Section 9, as amended) is amended to read:

9 "21-21H-9. RULES.--The department may adopt such rules
10 as necessary or appropriate to implement the provisions of
11 the New Mexico Scholars Act. A financial aid officer may
12 exercise professional judgment when special circumstances
13 exist to adjust the cost of attendance or the expected family
14 contribution or to modify other factors that make the program
15 responsive to a student's special financial circumstances and
16 for which documentation exists in the student's file within
17 the parameters authorized for this program."

18 SECTION 7. EFFECTIVE DATE.--The effective date of the
19 provisions of this act is July 1, 2013. _____

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