



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AMENDMENT MEMO

2009 Assembly Bill 604

Assembly Amendments 1 and 2

Memo published: March 26, 2010

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Under current law, the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB) administers the Academic Excellence Higher Education Scholarship Program under which HEAB awards scholarships to certain designated scholars who enroll full time in a public or private institution of higher education in this state that is participating in the program.

Currently, the scholarships may be awarded to the seniors with the highest grade point average (GPA) from each high school in the state. These students are referred to as “scholars.” The number of scholars that may be designated in each high school is based on the number of students in the high school, and ranges from one scholar in a high school with 80 to 500 students, up to six scholars in a high school with 2,500 or more students.

Under current law, if a student who is eligible for a scholarship decides to enroll in a school outside of Wisconsin or declines the scholarship for any other reason, the scholarship may be awarded to an alternate student. If a high school does not weigh its courses for purposes of determining GPAs, an alternate must have the same GPA as the original scholar. If the high school does weight its courses, and no other student has the same GPA as the original scholar, the school may designate as an alternate the student with the next highest GPA.

Assembly Bill 604 amends the law pertaining to designation of alternate students so that the process is the same for all high schools, regardless of whether the school weights its GPAs. Under the bill, if a designated scholar declines a scholarship, a high school must designate as alternates any remaining seniors with the same GPA as the scholar or, if there is no other student with the same GPA, any remaining seniors with the next highest GPA, but not less than 3.800 or the equivalent.

Assembly Amendment 1

Under current law, a student who has received a scholarship under the program, is enrolled in an institution of higher education, maintains at least a 3.000 GPA, and makes satisfactory progress towards a degree or diploma, is granted the scholarship for the next academic year. Assembly Amendment 1 provides that if a student who has been awarded a scholarship and has completed their freshman year at an institution of higher education does not enroll in a participating institution of higher education the next year, they are granted the scholarship for the subsequent year if they attend an institution of higher education that year. In other words, a student who is awarded a scholarship may take a year off of school without losing eligibility for a full four-year scholarship.

Assembly Amendment 2

Assembly Amendment 2 specifies that s. 20.003 (4), Stats., does not apply to the action of the Legislature in enacting the bill.

Section 20.003 (4), Stats., states that no bill directly or indirectly affecting general purpose revenues may be enacted if it would cause the estimated general fund balance to fall below an amount specified in the statute.

Legislative History

Assembly Amendments 1 and 2 were offered by the Joint Committee on Finance on March 16, 2010, and recommended for adoption by that committee on March 17, 2010, on successive votes of Ayes, 16; Noes, 0.

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