

HCS#2 HB 1812 -- ACCESS MISSOURI FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Kingery

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 11 to 0.

Currently, students at public four-year institutions, including Linn State Technical College, and private institutions receive a maximum amount of financial assistance awards of \$2,150 and \$4,600 respectively from the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program. Beginning with the 2014-2015 academic year, this substitute combines the categories for these schools into one with a \$2,850 maximum and a \$1,500 minimum award and increases the maximum award for community colleges from \$1,000 to \$1,300. Any award amount will be reduced by the amount of a student's payment from the A+ Schools Program or any successor program.

Beginning with the 2010-2011 academic year, the substitute revises the grade required for renewing an Access Missouri award from a 2.5 grade point average (GPA) on a four-point scale to maintaining satisfactory academic progress for those scholarship recipients who have less than 60 semester hours, while retaining the 2.5 GPA for those with 60 semester hours or more. Satisfactory academic progress is to be defined by the institution of attendance but cannot be lower than a 2.0 on a four-point scale. The substitute clarifies that the required GPA for the renewal of other assistance programs will continue to be 2.5. In order to award the additional scholarships as a result of the revised GPA requirement, award amounts will be refigured within the annual appropriation amount.

The substitute repeals the current expiration date of the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program and specifies that any provisions regarding a termination date will not apply to the program.

The substitute contain an emergency clause for the provisions regarding the revised requirements for renewing an award.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2011, FY 2012, and FY 2013.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that the Access Missouri Program is a needs-based scholarship in which 29% of the recipients receive 52% of the funding because of the distinction made in award amounts based on the type of college attended. No other publicly funded aid program rewards a student for choosing a more expensive college.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Kingery; University of Missouri-Columbia; Missouri Southern State University; Wally Pfeffer, Mizzou Alumni Association; Denise Boyd, MU Parents' Association; Associated Students of the University of Missouri; Amanda Shelton, Missouri Students Association; Gary Smith, University of Missouri Flagship Council; Evan Wood; Hannah Teague; and Missouri National Education Association.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that in the two former programs that were combined to establish the Access Missouri Program, students at private institutions received 64% of the total amount. Private colleges offer more choices and individualization that can help first-generation college students.

Testifying against the bill were Robert Stein, Commissioner of Higher Education; Marianne Inman, Central Methodist University; Elizabeth Stroble, Webster University; Minda and Catherine Cox; Kayla Kell; Austin Sailors; Misty Todd; Kathleen Daily; Angelica Randall; James Kelley; Caroline Slavin; Cameron Ayres; Matthew Tegg; Kristen Withrow; Michelle Arnold; Marcy Greenwade; Jamie Mayberry; Isaac, Brian, and Cathy Thompson; Lisa VerPloeg; Caleb and Beth McElvain; and Lindenwood University.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say state support for higher education declined by half in the last decade.

Testifying on the bill was Joshua Travis.