

SB2426



103RD GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2023 and 2024

SB2426

Introduced 2/10/2023, by Sen. Ram Villivalam

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

110 ILCS 947/62

Amends the Higher Education Student Assistance Act. Defines "dependent". Provides that beginning no later than the 2024-2025 academic year, if an exonerated person has been found by the Commission to qualify for a grant under this Section, and that person has not yet exhausted his or her eligibility for assistance, the exonerated person may designate one or more dependents to use any unexpended portion of the exonerated person's eligibility, up to the total benefit for which the exonerated person is eligible. Provides that the combined benefits used by the exonerated person and any designated dependents may not exceed the total benefit for which the exonerated person is eligible. Provides that if funding is insufficient to serve all applicants, the Commission may prioritize applicants who have been exonerated over applicants who are dependents of exonerated individuals.

LRB103 30819 RJT 57315 b

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning education.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Higher Education Student Assistance Act is
5 amended by changing Section 62 as follows:

6 (110 ILCS 947/62)

7 Sec. 62. Grants for exonerated persons.

8 (a) In this Section:

9 "Dependent" means any spouse, natural child, legally
10 adopted child, or child in the legal custody of an individual.

11 "Exonerated person" means an individual who has received a
12 pardon from the Governor of the State of Illinois stating that
13 such a pardon is issued on the grounds of innocence of the
14 crime for which he or she was imprisoned or an individual who
15 has received a certificate of innocence from a circuit court
16 pursuant to Section 2-702 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

17 "Satisfactory academic progress" means the qualified
18 applicant's maintenance of minimum standards of academic
19 performance, consistent with requirements for maintaining
20 federal financial aid eligibility, as determined by the
21 institution of higher learning.

22 (b) Subject to a separate appropriation for this purpose,
23 the Commission shall, each year, receive and consider

1 applications for grant assistance under this Section.
2 Recipients of grants issued by the Commission in accordance
3 with this Section must be exonerated persons or, as described
4 in subsection (c-1) of this Section, their dependents.
5 Provided that the recipient is maintaining satisfactory
6 academic progress, the funds from the grant may be used to pay
7 up to 8 semesters or 12 quarters of full payment of tuition and
8 mandatory fees at any public university or public community
9 college located in this State for either full or part-time
10 study. This benefit may be used for undergraduate or graduate
11 study.

12 In addition, an exonerated person or, as described in
13 subsection (c-1) of this Section, a dependent who has not yet
14 received a high school diploma or a State of Illinois High
15 School Diploma and completes a high school equivalency
16 preparation course through an Illinois Community College
17 Board-approved provider may use grant funds to pay costs
18 associated with obtaining a State of Illinois High School
19 Diploma, including payment of the cost of the high school
20 equivalency test and up to one retest on each test module, and
21 any additional fees that may be required in order to obtain a
22 State of Illinois High School Diploma or an official
23 transcript of test scores after successful completion of the
24 high school equivalency test.

25 (c) An applicant for a grant under this Section need not
26 demonstrate financial need to qualify for the benefits and

1 need not be an resident of the State at the time of enrollment.

2 (c-1) Beginning no later than the 2024-2025 academic year,
3 if an exonerated person has been found by the Commission to
4 qualify for a grant under this Section, and that person has not
5 yet exhausted his or her eligibility for assistance described
6 in subsection (b), the exonerated person may designate one or
7 more dependents to use any unexpended portion of the
8 exonerated person's eligibility, up to the total benefit for
9 which the exonerated person is eligible. The combined benefits
10 used by the exonerated person and any designated dependents
11 may not exceed the total benefit for which the exonerated
12 person is eligible. If funding is insufficient to serve all
13 applicants, the Commission may prioritize applicants who have
14 been exonerated over applicants who are dependents of
15 exonerated individuals.

16 (d) The Commission may adopt any rules necessary to
17 implement and administer this Section.

18 (Source: P.A. 102-1100, eff. 1-1-23.)