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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

H. F. No. **820**

02/12/2015 Authored by Applebaum and Selcer

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Higher Education Policy and Finance

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to higher education; establishing a merit-based academic excellence
1.3 grant program for certain Minnesota undergraduate students; appropriating
1.4 money; proposing coding for new law in Minnesota Statutes, chapter 136A.
1.5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.6 Section 1. **[136A.123] ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE GRANTS.**

1.7 Subdivision 1. Eligibility for grants. An applicant is eligible to be considered for
1.8 an academic excellence grant if the applicant:

- 1.9 (1) is a resident of the state of Minnesota;
- 1.10 (2) is a graduate of a secondary school or its equivalent, or is 17 years or over,
- 1.11 and has met all the requirements for admission as a student to an eligible postsecondary
- 1.12 institution operated by the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota or the Board
- 1.13 of Trustees of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities;
- 1.14 (3) is not in default, as defined by the office, of any federal or state educational loan;
- 1.15 (4) has a family adjusted gross income of less than \$100,000;
- 1.16 (5) plans to enroll in or is currently enrolled in a four-year degree program; and
- 1.17 (6) meets the academic eligibility requirements established in this section.

1.18 Subd. 2. Academic eligibility requirements. (a) A student meets the academic
1.19 eligibility requirements to receive a grant under this section if the applicant:

- 1.20 (1) received a grade point average of 3.5 or higher on a 4.0 scale across all years
- 1.21 that the student attended high school; and
- 1.22 (2) received a score of 25 or higher on the American College Testing (ACT) college
- 1.23 readiness test, or an equivalent score on the College Board's SAT.

2.1 (b) If an eligible student attended a high school that did not calculate grade point
 2.2 averages on a 4.0 scale, the commissioner must convert the student's grade point average
 2.3 to a 4.0 scale when determining if the student is academically eligible for a grant under
 2.4 this section.

2.5 Subd. 3. **Application.** To receive an academic excellence grant, students must
 2.6 submit an application to the office in the form and manner prescribed by the commissioner
 2.7 demonstrating that they are eligible for a grant and have met the academic eligibility
 2.8 requirements established in this section. The deadline for the office to accept applications
 2.9 for academic excellence grants for a term is 30 days after the start of that term.

2.10 Subd. 4. **Allocation.** Grants must be awarded on a funds-available basis to those
 2.11 applicants who meet the office's requirements.

2.12 Subd. 5. **Grant stipends.** Grant stipends shall pay for the cost of tuition and fees
 2.13 not covered by the federal Pell grant or other state grants and scholarships awarded under
 2.14 sections 136A.101 to 136A.1311.

2.15 Subd. 6. **Insufficient appropriation.** If the amount appropriated is determined by
 2.16 the commissioner to be insufficient to make full awards to applicants under subdivision 4,
 2.17 the commissioner must reduce awards proportionally for all grant recipients.

2.18 Subd. 7. **Awards.** An undergraduate student who meets the requirements of this
 2.19 section is eligible to apply for and receive a grant in any year of undergraduate study unless:

2.20 (1) the student has obtained a baccalaureate degree; or

2.21 (2) the student has previously been enrolled at an eligible institution full time
 2.22 or the equivalent for eight semesters or the equivalent, excluding courses taken from a
 2.23 Minnesota school or postsecondary institution which is not eligible for the grant program
 2.24 and from which a student transferred no credit.

2.25 Subd. 8. **Renewal.** Each grant is renewable contingent on continued residency in
 2.26 Minnesota and satisfactory academic progress, and on the recommendation of the eligible
 2.27 institution currently attended. To continue to receive a grant, the student must apply for
 2.28 renewal each year.

2.29 Sec. 2. **APPROPRIATION; ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE GRANTS.**

2.30 \$..... in fiscal year 2016 and \$..... in fiscal year 2017 are appropriated from the
 2.31 general fund to the commissioner of the Office of Higher Education to fund the academic
 2.32 excellence grant program established in section 1.