

SB145 INTRODUCED



1 SHJG55-1

2 By Senator Livingston

3 RFD: Fiscal Responsibility and Economic Development

4 First Read: 23-Mar-23

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SYNOPSIS:

Under existing law, the Volunteer Rescue Squad Tuition Reimbursement Act of 2018, provides tuition reimbursement for students who successfully complete an Emergency Medical Technician or Paramedic certification program offered by a member institution of the Alabama Community College System or the Alabama Fire College and contract to provide three years of service to a volunteer rescue squad or fire department.

This bill would decrease the required contracted for service time after graduation and licensing from three years to two years.

This bill would expand the program to include students who contract and provide service to an ambulance service.

This bill would provide for exclusions from reimbursement.

This bill would increase the maximum amount of operational expenses reimbursed by the program to the Alabama Community College System for administering the program from two percent to 10 percent of the funding for the program per fiscal year.

This bill would also provide for the retroactive reimbursement of certain related necessary fees and required expenses.



SB145 INTRODUCED

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A BILL

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TO BE ENTITLED

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AN ACT

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Relating to the Volunteer Rescue Squad Tuition

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Reimbursement Act of 2018; to amend Sections 22-18-60,

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22-18-61, and 22-18-64, Code of Alabama 1975, to decrease the

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required contracted for service time after graduation and

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licensing from three years to two years; to expand the program

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to include students who contract and provide service to

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ambulance services; to provide exclusions from reimbursement;

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and to increase the amount of operational expenses reimbursed

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to the Alabama Community College System; and to add Section

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22-18-61.1 to the Code of Alabama 1975, to provide for the

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retroactive reimbursement of certain fees and expenses.

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BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF ALABAMA:

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Section 1. Sections 22-18-60, 22-18-61, and 22-18-64 of

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the Code of Alabama 1975, are amended to read as follows:

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"§22-18-60

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For the purposes of this article, the following terms

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shall have the following meanings:

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(1) ACCS. The Alabama Community College System.

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(2) AMBULANCE SERVICE. An ambulance service located in

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this state which is a member of the Alabama Association of

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Ambulance Services.

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~~(2)~~ (3) ASSOCIATIONS. The Alabama Association of Rescue



SB145 INTRODUCED

57 Squads ~~or~~, the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire
58 Departments, or the Alabama Association of Ambulance Services.

59 ~~(3)~~ (4) EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES PERSONNEL (EMSP). All
60 recognized levels of personnel licensed by the Alabama
61 Department of Public Health, who have met all primary ~~and/or~~
62 or renewal educational requirements, or both, set by the
63 Alabama Department of Public Health, and who are allowed to
64 provide medical care within the level of their scope of
65 practice granted by the Office of Emergency Medical Services
66 ~~(OEMS)~~ within the Alabama Department of Public Health.

67 ~~(4)~~ (5) FIRE COLLEGE. The Alabama Fire College.

68 ~~(5)~~ (6) STUDENT. A student enrolled in an emergency
69 medical services certification program at a member institution
70 of the ~~Alabama Community College System~~ ACCS, the ~~Alabama Fire~~
71 ~~College~~ fire college, or the University of South Alabama.

72 (7) TUITION COSTS. Includes the actual cost of tuition
73 and fees required to complete an approved course of
74 instruction for EMSP certification, as determined by each
75 eligible educational institution.

76 ~~(6)~~ (8) VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD. A volunteer rescue squad
77 located in ~~the State of Alabama and~~ this state which is a
78 member of the Alabama Association of Rescue Squads.

79 ~~(7)~~ (9) VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT. A volunteer fire
80 department located in ~~the State of Alabama and~~ this state
81 which is a member of the Alabama Association of Volunteer Fire
82 Departments."

83 "§22-18-61

84 (a) The ~~Alabama Community College System~~ ACCS, the



SB145 INTRODUCED

85 ~~Alabama Fire College~~ fire college, and the University of South
86 Alabama, in consultation with the associations, shall jointly
87 develop and administer a student tuition reimbursement program
88 for students ~~that agree in the form of an enforceable~~ who
89 ~~contract agreement,~~ to provide two years of emergency medical
90 services for volunteer rescue squads ~~or,~~ volunteer fire
91 departments ~~in Alabama,~~ or ambulance services after becoming a
92 licensed EMSP ~~subject to the student agreeing to provide three~~
93 ~~years of service to a volunteer rescue squad or volunteer fire~~
94 ~~department.~~

95 (b) (1) Tuition reimbursement under this article shall
96 ~~be the actual~~ cover tuition costs paid by the student
97 ~~associated with obtaining~~ to complete an approved course of
98 instruction for certification. Tuition reimbursement may also
99 cover the repayment of tuition costs provided to a student by
100 an association or members of an association to pay any of his
101 or her eligible tuition costs.

102 (2) Tuition reimbursement under this article shall not
103 reimburse a student for any tuition costs covered by grants or
104 other monetary awards provided to a student including, but not
105 limited to, federal education grants and scholarships, as
106 determined by the ACCS.

107 (3) Tuition costs shall not be reimbursed until the
108 student provides ACCS and the associations with documentation
109 that he or she has successfully completed the approved course
110 of instruction, proof of passing the certification exam,
111 production of a valid EMSP license from the Alabama Department
112 of Public Health and a contractual agreement to comply with



SB145 INTRODUCED

113 the service requirements.

114 (c) In the event that a tuition reimbursement recipient
115 fails to meet the service requirements for any reason other
116 than extreme hardship as defined within the joint agreement
117 required in Section 22-18-64(b), the individual shall be
118 deemed to have breached the underlying contract and shall be
119 liable in the form of monetary damages to the state for the
120 immediate repayment of the total tuition ~~amount~~ costs
121 reimbursed, plus interest at the rate of eight percent. The
122 associations shall notify ACCS of recipients who fail to meet
123 the service requirements."

124 "§22-18-64

125 (a) The ACCS shall annually report on the condition and
126 accomplishments of the tuition reimbursement program to the
127 Governor, Speaker of the House of Representatives, President
128 Pro Tempore of the Senate, the Chair of the House Ways and
129 Means Education Committee, the Chair of the Senate Finance and
130 Taxation Education Committee, and the Deputy Director of the
131 Legislative Services Agency, Fiscal Division. The report shall
132 include the number of students participating in the program
133 and the amount of tuition reimbursed for the reporting year.
134 The member institutions of the ACCS, the ~~Fire College~~ fire
135 college, and the University of South Alabama shall provide
136 this information to ACCS for inclusion in the annual report.
137 The report shall be submitted by the fifth legislative day of
138 each regular session of the Legislature.

139 (b) The ACCS, the ~~Fire College~~ fire college, and the
140 University of South Alabama shall enter into a joint agreement



SB145 INTRODUCED

141 to implement and administer the tuition reimbursement program,
142 which shall include provisions for ensuring that operational
143 expenses for the program in a fiscal year do not exceed ~~two~~ 10
144 percent of the funding for the program in that fiscal year.
145 The joint agreement shall provide for limiting the acceptance
146 of applications for the program or limiting tuition
147 reimbursements when necessary, or both.

148 (c) Any monies received for the operations of the
149 tuition reimbursement program, including repayments, interest,
150 and penalties paid because of failure to honor service
151 requirements, shall be used to fund tuition reimbursements."

152 Section 2. Section 22-18-61.1 is added to the Code of
153 Alabama 1975, to read as follows:

154 §22-18-61.1

155 Upon written request by an association or a member of
156 an association, the ACCS may retroactively consider
157 reimbursement of actual tuition costs, excluding required
158 fees, provided by the association or its members to a student
159 to pay his or her eligible tuition costs.

160 Section 3. Section 1 of this act shall become effective
161 on the first day of the third month following its passage and
162 approval by the Governor, or its otherwise becoming law.

163 Section 2 of this act shall become effective immediately
164 following its passage and approval by the Governor, or its
165 otherwise becoming law.