

1 A bill to be entitled
 2 An act relating to education and training
 3 opportunities; amending s. 110.1099, F.S.; providing
 4 certain education opportunities for specified local
 5 government employees; amending s. 1009.265, F.S.;
 6 authorizing the use of fee waivers for veterans and
 7 specified local government employees; providing a
 8 definition; providing an effective date.

9
 10 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

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 12 Section 1. Section 110.1099, Florida Statutes, is amended
 13 to read:

14 110.1099 Education and training opportunities for state
 15 and local government employees.-

16 (1) Education and training are an integral component in
 17 improving the delivery of services to the public. Recognizing
 18 that the application of productivity-enhancing technology and
 19 practice demands continuous educational and training
 20 opportunities, a state or local government employee may be
 21 authorized to receive a voucher or grant, for matriculation
 22 fees, to attend work-related courses at public community
 23 colleges, public career centers, or public universities. The
 24 department may implement ~~the provisions of~~ this section from
 25 funds appropriated to the department for this purpose. If ~~In the~~
 26 ~~event~~ insufficient funds are appropriated to the department,

27 | each state or local government agency may supplement these funds
 28 | to support the training and education needs of its employees
 29 | from funds appropriated to the agency.

30 | (2) The department, in conjunction with the state and
 31 | local government agencies, shall request that public
 32 | universities provide evening and weekend programs for state and
 33 | local government employees. When evening and weekend training
 34 | and educational programs are not available, a state or local
 35 | government ~~an~~ employee may be authorized to take paid time off
 36 | during his or her regular working hours for training and career
 37 | development, ~~as provided in s. 110.105(1)~~, if such training
 38 | benefits the employer as determined by that employee's agency
 39 | head.

40 | (3) A state or local government ~~An~~ employee who exhibits
 41 | superior aptitude and performance may be authorized by that
 42 | employee's agency head to take a paid educational leave of
 43 | absence for up to 1 academic year at a time, for specific
 44 | approved work-related education and training. That employee must
 45 | enter into a contract to return to state or local government
 46 | employment for a period of time equal to the length of the leave
 47 | of absence or refund salary and benefits paid during his or her
 48 | educational leave of absence.

49 | (4) As a precondition to approving a state or local
 50 | government ~~an~~ employee's training request, the state or local
 51 | government ~~an~~ agency ~~or the judicial branch~~ may require the ~~an~~
 52 | employee to enter into an agreement that requires the employee

53 to reimburse the agency ~~or judicial branch~~ for the registration
54 fee or similar expense for any training or training series when
55 the cost of the fee or similar expense exceeds \$1,000 if the
56 employee voluntarily terminates employment or is discharged for
57 cause from the agency ~~or judicial branch~~ within a specified
58 period of time not to exceed 4 years after the conclusion of the
59 training. This subsection does not apply to any training program
60 that a state or local government ~~an agency or the judicial~~
61 ~~branch~~ requires an employee to attend. A state or local
62 government ~~An agency or the judicial branch~~ may pay the
63 outstanding balance then due and owing on behalf of a state or
64 local government employee under this subsection in connection
65 with the recruitment and hiring of that ~~such state~~ employee.

66 (5) As used in this section, the term:

67 (a) "Local government employee" means a full-time employee
68 of a county or municipality who is a law enforcement officer as
69 defined in s. 943.10(1), a correctional officer as defined in s.
70 943.10(2), a firefighter as defined in s. 633.30(1), or an
71 emergency medical technician or paramedic as defined in s.
72 401.23.

73 (b) "State employee" means an employee of the executive or
74 judicial branch of state government, except for a person
75 employed by a state university, and includes any member of the
76 Florida Highway Patrol.

77 Section 2. Section 1009.265, Florida Statutes, is amended
78 to read:

79 | 1009.265 ~~State employee~~ Fee waivers.—

80 | (1) (a) As a benefit to the employers ~~employer~~ and
 81 | employees of ~~the~~ state and local government, subject to approval
 82 | by an employee's agency head or the equivalent, each state
 83 | university and Florida College System institution shall waive
 84 | tuition and fees for state and local government employees to
 85 | enroll for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term on a space-
 86 | available basis.

87 | (b) As a benefit to veterans of the United States Armed
 88 | Forces, each state university and Florida College System
 89 | institution shall waive tuition and fees for veterans to enroll
 90 | for up to 6 credit hours of courses per term on a space-
 91 | available basis.

92 | (2) The Chief Financial Officer, in cooperation with the
 93 | Florida College System institutions and state universities,
 94 | shall identify and implement ways to ease the administrative
 95 | burden to Florida College System institutions and state
 96 | universities, including, but not limited to, providing easier
 97 | access to verify state and local government employment and
 98 | military service.

99 | (3) From funds appropriated by the Legislature for
 100 | administrative costs to implement this section, Florida College
 101 | System institutions and state universities shall be reimbursed
 102 | on a pro rata basis according to the cost assessment data
 103 | developed by the Department of Education.

104 | (4) The Auditor General shall include a review of the cost

105 assessment data in conjunction with his or her audit
 106 responsibilities for Florida College System institutions, state
 107 universities, and the Department of Education.

108 (5) As used in ~~For purposes of~~ this section, the term:

109 (a) "Local government employee" means a full-time employee
 110 of a county or municipality who is a law enforcement officer as
 111 defined in s. 943.10(1), a correctional officer as defined in s.
 112 943.10(2), a firefighter as defined in s. 633.30(1), or an
 113 emergency medical technician or paramedic as defined in s.
 114 401.23.

115 (b) "State employee" means an employee ~~employees of the~~
 116 ~~state include employees of the executive, legislative, or and~~
 117 ~~judicial branch branches~~ of state government, except for a
 118 person ~~persons~~ employed by a state university, and includes any
 119 member of the Florida Highway Patrol.

120 (c) "Veteran" has the same meaning as provided in s.
 121 1.01(14).

122 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2015.