

2016 -- S 2203

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TUITION EQUITY

Introduced By: Senators Pichardo, Goodwin, Crowley, Metts, and Jabour

Date Introduced: January 27, 2016

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 16-59 of the General Laws entitled "Board of Governors for Higher
2 Education" is hereby amended by adding thereto the following section:

3 **16-59-9.2. Student Equal Economic Opportunity Act.--** Notwithstanding any other
4 provision of the general or public laws:

5 (1) A student, other than a non-immigrant alien within the meaning of 8 U.S.C. 1101
6 (a)(15) who meets all of the following requirements, shall be exempt from paying nonresident
7 tuition at Rhode Island public universities, colleges or community colleges if they:

8 (i) Have attended an approved Rhode Island high school for three (3) or more years;

9 (ii) Have graduated from an approved Rhode Island high school or received a high school
10 equivalency diploma from the state of Rhode Island;

11 (iii) Have registered as an entering student at, or are currently enrolled at, an accredited
12 institution of higher education in Rhode Island not earlier than the fall semester or quarter of the
13 2014-2015 academic year; and

14 (iv) Have filed with the institution of higher education an affidavit stating that:

15 (A) The student meets the requirements of subsections (1)(i) and (1)(ii) of this section;
16 and

17 (B) The student is a U.S. citizen, has lawful immigration status, or, if the student is not a
18 U.S. citizen and does not have a lawful immigration status, has filed an application for lawful
19 immigration status, or will file such an application as soon as they are eligible to do so. The

1 affidavit shall not require students to reveal their immigration or citizenship status. Provided, that
2 any student who, because of the lack of lawful immigration status, is not eligible to receive
3 financial assistance from the federal government and/or the state of Rhode Island for attending an
4 institution of higher education, shall not apply for and/or receive such financial assistance and/or
5 exemption.

6 (2) Identifiable student information obtained pursuant to subsection (1)(iv) of this section
7 shall be confidential except where such a requirement is inconsistent with federal law. If
8 information obtained pursuant to this section regarding a student's immigration status is provided
9 to any agency for purposes other than the implementation of this section, the entity providing the
10 information shall promptly notify the student.

11 (3) The Rhode Island board of education shall prescribe rules and regulations as may be
12 necessary for the implementation of this section.

13 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO EDUCATION -- TUITION EQUITY

1 This act would create the "Student Equal Economic Opportunity Act" which would
2 identify those students who are exempt from paying nonresident tuition at public universities,
3 colleges or community colleges.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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