



# House of Representatives

General Assembly

**File No. 441**

January Session, 2009

Substitute House Bill No. 5691

*House of Representatives, April 2, 2009*

The Committee on Higher Education and Employment Advancement reported through REP. WILLIS of the 64th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

## ***AN ACT CONCERNING POSTSECONDARY TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR ADOPTED CHILDREN.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2009*) (a) The Department of  
2 Children and Families shall provide postsecondary education  
3 assistance up to the cost of tuition, fees, books and, when applicable,  
4 room and board for each child who is accepted and enrolls as a part or  
5 full-time student at a public institution of higher education in this state  
6 and who (1) is under the guardianship of the department, (2) was  
7 under the guardianship of the department until such child's eighteenth  
8 birthday and continues to receive voluntary services from the  
9 department, (3) is adopted through the department's foster care  
10 program, or (4) is participating in the department's subsidized  
11 guardianship program.

12 (b) In order to be eligible for postsecondary education assistance  
13 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section, each such child shall (1)

14 begin postsecondary education the first semester immediately  
 15 following such child's high school graduation, (2) apply for every  
 16 appropriate grant and scholarship to offset postsecondary education  
 17 expenses pursuant to the department's policy, (3) provide the  
 18 department with documentation of such child's enrollment in a public  
 19 institution of higher education and application for grants or  
 20 scholarships, and (4) remain in good academic standing as defined by  
 21 the department.

22 (c) Each child whose application to the department for  
 23 postsecondary education assistance for the 2009-2010 school year is  
 24 accepted and who (1) is under the guardianship of the department, (2)  
 25 was under the guardianship of the department until such child's  
 26 eighteenth birthday and continues to receive voluntary services from  
 27 the department, or (3) was adopted through the department's foster  
 28 care program after December 31, 2004, shall receive postsecondary  
 29 education assistance for the 2009-2010 school year and every  
 30 consecutive school year thereafter pursuant to the department's  
 31 postsecondary education assistance policies that were in effect as of  
 32 January 1, 2009.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2009	New section

**HED**      *Joint Favorable Subst.*

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

**OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:**

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 10 \$	FY 11 \$
Children & Families, Dept.	GF - Cost	Significant	Significant

Note: GF=General Fund

**Municipal Impact:** None

**Explanation**

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) will incur significantly increased costs to enhance its support of post secondary education for young adults.

The bill expands this assistance program to include persons who attend a public institution of higher education in Connecticut and: (a) were adopted from foster care prior to 1/1/05, or (b) are in the subsidized guardianship program. This will result in estimated annualized costs of about \$2.6 million and \$0.4 million, respectively. Additional costs of about \$0.1 million each year will result from eliminating a current \$500 contribution requirement (department policy) for students remaining voluntarily under DCF guardianship (aged out of foster care) who attend in-state public institutions.

It should be noted that the above estimate assumes that the department will continue to financially support post secondary education for persons choosing to attend out-of-state or private educational institutions within Connecticut who: (a) aged out of foster care, or (b) were adopted from foster care after 12/31/04, under its current policy. The bill does not preclude the agency from providing this assistance.

No funding has been included in the Governor’s Recommended FY 10-11 Biennial Budget to expand DCF-paid post secondary education

assistance.

***The Out Years***

The fiscal impact identified above would continue subject to future changes in costs of attending public higher education institutions in Connecticut and fluctuations in DCF caseloads.

*Sources: 2/24/09 Public Hearing Testimony; DCF policy manual, cost and caseload data; University of Connecticut, Connecticut State University and Connecticut Community Colleges.*

**OLR Bill Analysis**

**sHB 5691**

***AN ACT CONCERNING POSTSECONDARY TUITION ASSISTANCE FOR ADOPTED CHILDREN.***

**SUMMARY:**

This bill requires the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to provide postsecondary education assistance for certain youth and establishes eligibility requirements for the assistance. DCF must provide financial assistance for each youth who:

1. is in DCF guardianship,
2. was in DCF guardianship until his or her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday and is still receiving voluntary services from DCF,
3. is adopted through the DCF foster care program, or
4. participates in the subsidized guardianship program.

The bill requires that the students be accepted and enrolled part- or full-time at a public higher education institution in the state. And it limits the financial assistance to the cost of tuition, fees, books, and, if applicable, room and board.

By policy, DCF already provides financial assistance for post-secondary educational and vocational opportunities for youths (1) in DCF guardianship, (2) over age 18 but still receiving voluntary services from DCF, or (3) adopted through its foster care program after December 31, 2004.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2009

**DCF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION ASSISTANCE**

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**Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be eligible for the assistance, each youth must:

1. begin postsecondary education in the first semester immediately following his or her high school graduation;
2. apply for every appropriate grant and scholarship to offset postsecondary education expenses, pursuant to DCF policy;
3. provide DCF with documentation of his or her enrollment in a public higher education institution in the state and financial aid application; and
4. remain in good academic standing, as the department defines.

The bill requires that youth continue to receive assistance if they are (1) eligible for tuition assistance under current DCF policy and (2) approved to receive such assistance for the 2009-10 academic year. This applies for the 2009-10 academic year and every consecutive school year thereafter, pursuant to DCF policies in effect as of January 1, 2009.

**BACKGROUND*****Current DCF Policy***

The DCF policy manual currently requires it to provide financial assistance for youth (1) committed to DCF on their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday or (2) adopted through the DCF foster care program after December 31, 2004. It allows such assistance to continue until the person's 23<sup>rd</sup> birthday under certain conditions. The policy manual limits the amount paid for students adopted through the DCF foster care program and it sets other requirements for all students receiving assistance. These include requirements for students to apply and compete for appropriate grants and scholarships to offset the cost and to contribute \$500 to their annual educational costs unless grants and scholarships obtained cover the full cost. The policy, unlike the bill, does not require students to be enrolled at a particular college or university as a condition of receiving assistance (DCF Policy Manual §§ 42-20-20, 42-20-21, and 48-20-2).

**COMMITTEE ACTION**

Higher Education and Employment Advancement Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 17 Nay 0 (03/17/2009)