



General Assembly

January Session, 2023

**Raised Bill No. 1043**

LCO No. 4344



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND  
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:  
(HED)

***AN ACT CONCERNING THE ROBERTA B. WILLIS SCHOLARSHIP  
PROGRAM.***

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

1 Section 1. Section 10a-173 of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2023*):

3 (a) For the purposes of this section:

4 (1) (A) "Family contribution" means the expected family contribution  
5 for educational costs as computed from [the] a student's Free  
6 Application for Federal Student Aid; and

7 (B) On and after July 1, 2024, "family contribution" means the amount  
8 in excess of a student's financial need as determined by the student aid  
9 index;

10 (2) "Full-time or part-time undergraduate student" means a student  
11 who is enrolled at an institution of higher education in a course of study  
12 leading to such student's first associate or bachelor's degree and who is

13 carrying, for a full-time student, twelve or more semester credit hours,  
14 or, for a part-time student, between six and eleven semester credit hours  
15 at such institution of higher education;

16 (3) "Independent institution of higher education" means a nonprofit  
17 institution established in this state (A) that has degree-granting  
18 authority in this state; (B) that has its main campus located in this state;  
19 (C) that is not included in the Connecticut system of public higher  
20 education; and (D) whose primary function is not the preparation of  
21 students for religious vocation;

22 (4) "Public institution of higher education" means the constituent  
23 units of the state system of higher education identified in subdivisions  
24 (1) and (2) of section 10a-1;

25 (5) "Eligible educational costs" means the tuition and required fees for  
26 an individual student that are published by each institution of higher  
27 education participating in the grant program established under this  
28 section, plus a fixed amount for required books and educational  
29 supplies as determined by the Office of Higher Education; and

30 (6) "Student aid index" means the financial aid index as computed  
31 from a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid.

32 (b) The state, acting through the Office of Higher Education, shall  
33 establish the Governor's Scholarship program to annually make need-  
34 based financial aid available for eligible educational costs for  
35 Connecticut residents enrolled at Connecticut's public and independent  
36 institutions of higher education as full-time or part-time undergraduate  
37 students beginning with new or transfer students in the fiscal year  
38 ending June 30, 2014. On and after July 1, 2016, said program shall be  
39 known as the "Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program". Any award made  
40 to a student in the fiscal year ending June 30, 2013, under the capitol  
41 scholarship grant program, established under section 10a-169 of the  
42 general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, the  
43 Connecticut aid to public college students grant program, established  
44 under section 10a-164a of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised

45 to January 1, 2013, Connecticut aid to Charter Oak, established under  
46 subsection (c) of section 10a-164a of the general statutes, revision of  
47 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, or the Connecticut independent college  
48 student grant program, established under section 10a-36 of the general  
49 statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, shall be offered  
50 under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program and be renewable for  
51 the life of the original award, provided such student meets and  
52 continues to meet the need and academic standards established for  
53 purposes of the program under which such student received the original  
54 award.

55 (c) Within available appropriations, the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship  
56 program shall include a need and merit-based grant, a need-based grant  
57 and a Charter Oak grant. The need and merit-based grant shall be  
58 funded at not less than twenty per cent but not more than thirty per cent  
59 of available appropriations. The need-based grant shall be funded at up  
60 to eighty per cent of available appropriations. The Charter Oak grant  
61 shall be not less than one hundred thousand dollars of available  
62 appropriations. There shall be an administrative allowance based on  
63 one-quarter of one per cent of the available appropriations, but (1) for  
64 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, not less than three hundred fifty  
65 thousand dollars, and (2) for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, and  
66 each fiscal year thereafter, not less than one hundred thousand dollars.  
67 In addition to the amount of the annual appropriation allocated to the  
68 regional community-technical colleges under subsection (e) of this  
69 section, and to regional community-technical college students under  
70 subsection (d) of this section, not less than two and one-half per cent of  
71 the annual appropriation shall be allocated to the regional community-  
72 technical colleges to be used for financial aid purposes.

73 (d) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based grant  
74 shall be available to any Connecticut resident who is a full-time or part-  
75 time undergraduate student at any public or independent institution of  
76 higher education. The Office of Higher Education shall determine  
77 eligibility by financial need based on family contribution and on and  
78 after July 1, 2024, based on student aid index and eligibility by merit

79 based on either previous high school academic achievement or  
80 performance on standardized academic aptitude tests. The Office of  
81 Higher Education shall make awards according to a sliding scale,  
82 annually determined by said office, up to a maximum family  
83 contribution and based on available appropriations and eligible  
84 students. The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based grant  
85 shall be awarded in a higher amount than the need-based grant  
86 awarded pursuant to subsection (e) of this section. Recipients of the  
87 need and merit-based grant shall not be eligible to receive an additional  
88 need-based award. The order of institutions of higher education  
89 provided by a student on the student's Free Application for Federal  
90 Student Aid shall not affect the student's eligibility for an award under  
91 this subsection. The accepting institution of higher education shall  
92 disburse sums awarded under the need and merit-based grant for  
93 payment of the student's eligible educational costs.

94 (e) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need-based grant shall be  
95 available to any Connecticut resident who is a full-time or part-time  
96 undergraduate student at any public or independent institution of  
97 higher education. The amount of the annual appropriation to be  
98 allocated to each institution of higher education shall be determined by  
99 its actual full-time equivalent enrollment of undergraduate students  
100 who are Connecticut residents with a family contribution during the fall  
101 semester of the fiscal year two years prior to the grant year of an amount  
102 not greater than two hundred per cent of the maximum family  
103 contribution or, on and after July 1, 2024, the student aid index eligible  
104 for a federal Pell grant award for the academic year one year prior to the  
105 grant year. Not later than July first, annually, each institution of higher  
106 education shall report such enrollment data to the Office of Higher  
107 Education. Not later than October first, annually, the Office of Higher  
108 Education shall (1) publish such enrollment data on its Internet web site,  
109 and (2) notify each institution of higher education of the proportion of  
110 the annual appropriation that such institution of higher education will  
111 receive the following fiscal year and publish the proportions for each  
112 institution of higher education on its Internet web site. Participating

113 institutions of higher education shall make awards (A) to eligible full-  
114 time students in an amount up to four thousand five hundred dollars,  
115 and (B) to eligible part-time students in an amount that is prorated  
116 according to the number of credits each student will earn for completing  
117 the course or courses in which such student is enrolled, such that a  
118 student enrolled in a course or courses earning (i) at least nine but less  
119 than twelve credits is eligible for up to seventy-five per cent of the  
120 maximum award, and (ii) at least six but less than nine credits is eligible  
121 for up to fifty per cent of the maximum award. Each participating  
122 institution of higher education shall expend all of the moneys received  
123 under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program as direct financial  
124 assistance only for eligible educational costs.

125 (f) Participating institutions of higher education shall annually  
126 provide the Office of Higher Education with data and reports on all  
127 Connecticut students who applied for financial aid, including, but not  
128 limited to, students receiving a Roberta B. Willis Scholarship grant, in a  
129 form and at a time determined by said office. If an institution of higher  
130 education fails to submit information to the Office of Higher Education  
131 as directed, such institution shall be prohibited from participating in the  
132 scholarship program in the fiscal year following the fiscal year in which  
133 such institution failed to submit such information. Each participating  
134 institution of higher education shall maintain, for a period of not less  
135 than three years, records substantiating the reported number of  
136 Connecticut students and documentation utilized by the institution of  
137 higher education in determining eligibility of the student grant  
138 recipients. Such records shall be subject to audit or review. Funds not  
139 obligated by an institution of higher education shall be returned by May  
140 first in the fiscal year the grant was made to the Office of Higher  
141 Education for reallocation. Financial aid provided to Connecticut  
142 residents under this program shall be designated as a grant from the  
143 Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program.

144 (g) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Charter Oak grant shall be  
145 available to any full-time or part-time undergraduate student enrolled  
146 in Charter Oak State College. The Office of Higher Education shall

147 allocate any appropriation to Charter Oak State College to be used to  
148 provide grants for eligible educational costs to residents of this state  
149 who demonstrate substantial financial need and who are matriculated  
150 in a degree program at Charter Oak State College. Individual awards  
151 shall not exceed a student's calculated eligible educational costs.  
152 Financial aid provided to Connecticut residents under this program  
153 shall be designated as a grant from the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship  
154 program.

155 (h) In administering the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program, the  
156 Office of Higher Education shall develop and utilize fiscal procedures  
157 designed to ensure accountability of the public funds expended. Such  
158 procedures shall include provisions for compliance reviews that shall be  
159 conducted by the Office of Higher Education on any institution of  
160 higher education that participates in the program. Commencing with  
161 the fiscal year ending June 30, 2015, and biennially thereafter, each such  
162 institution of higher education shall submit the results of an audit done  
163 by an independent certified public accountant for each year of  
164 participation in the program. Any institution of higher education  
165 determined by the Office of Higher Education not to be in substantial  
166 compliance with the provisions of the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship  
167 program shall be ineligible to receive funds under the program for the  
168 fiscal year following the fiscal year in which the institution of higher  
169 education was determined not to be in substantial compliance. Funding  
170 shall be restored when the Office of Higher Education determines that  
171 the institution of higher education has returned to substantial  
172 compliance.

173 (i) Not later than January 1, 2024, and annually thereafter, the Office  
174 of Higher Education shall submit, in accordance with the provisions of  
175 section 11-4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly  
176 having cognizance of matters relating to higher education, a report  
177 concerning the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program for the current  
178 fiscal year, including, but not limited to, the (1) amount of the annual  
179 appropriation allocated to each participating institution of higher  
180 education pursuant to subsection (e) of this section and awarded to

181 students at each participating institution of higher education pursuant  
182 to subsection (d) of this section, and (2) number of Connecticut residents  
183 who were awarded grants.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:

Section 1	<i>July 1, 2023</i>	10a-173
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***Statement of Purpose:***

To require the Office of Higher Education to submit a report regarding the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program and to incorporate the new federal student aid index on and after July 1, 2024.

*[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]*