



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 Section 10a-173 of the general statutes is repealed and the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) ["Family] (A) Prior to July 1, 2024, "family contribution" means
5 the expected family contribution for educational costs as computed
6 from [the] a student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid; and

7 (B) On and after July 1, 2024, "family contribution" means the
8 amount in excess of a student's financial need as determined by the
9 student aid 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
12 study leading to such student's first associate or bachelor's degree and
13 who is carrying, for a full-time student, twelve or more semester credit
14 hours, or, for a part-time student, between six and eleven semester
15 credit hours 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
26 for an individual student that are published by each institution of
27 higher education participating in the grant program established under
28 this 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
36 independent institutions of higher education as full-time or part-time
37 undergraduate students beginning with new or transfer students in the
38 fiscal year ending June 30, 2014. On and after July 1, 2016, said
39 program shall be known as the "Roberta B. Willis Scholarship
40 program". Any award made to a student in the fiscal year ending June
41 30, 2013, under the capitol scholarship grant program, established
42 under section 10a-169 of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised
43 to January 1, 2013, the Connecticut aid to public college students grant
44 program, established under section 10a-164a of the general statutes,
45 revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, Connecticut aid to Charter
46 Oak, established under subsection (c) of section 10a-164a of the general
47 statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1, 2013, or the Connecticut
48 independent college student grant program, established under section
49 10a-36 of the general statutes, revision of 1958, revised to January 1,

50 2013, shall be offered under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program
51 and be renewable for the life of the original award, provided such
52 student meets and continues to meet the need and academic standards
53 established for purposes of the program under which such student
54 received the original award.

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

74 (d) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based grant
75 shall be available to any Connecticut resident who is a full-time or
76 part-time undergraduate student at any public or independent
77 institution of higher education. The Office of Higher Education shall
78 determine eligibility by financial need based on family contribution
79 and eligibility by merit based on either previous high school academic
80 achievement or performance on standardized academic aptitude tests.
81 The Office of Higher Education shall make awards according to a
82 sliding scale, annually determined by said office, up to a maximum

83 family contribution and based on available appropriations and eligible
84 students. The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship need and merit-based
85 grant 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
88 additional need-based award. The order of institutions of higher
89 education provided by a student on the student's Free Application for
90 Federal Student Aid shall not affect the student's eligibility for an
91 award under this subsection. The accepting institution of higher
92 education shall disburse sums awarded under the need and merit-
93 based grant for 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
101 fall semester of the fiscal year two years prior to the grant year of an
102 amount not greater than two hundred per cent of, prior to July 1, 2024,
103 the maximum family contribution or, on and after July 1, 2024, the
104 student aid index eligible for a federal Pell grant award for the
105 academic year one year prior to the grant year. Not later than July first,
106 annually, each institution of higher education shall report such
107 enrollment data to the Office of Higher Education. Not later than
108 October first, annually, the Office of Higher Education shall (1) publish
109 such enrollment data on its Internet web site, and (2) notify each
110 institution of higher education of the proportion of the annual
111 appropriation that such institution of higher education will receive the
112 following fiscal year and publish the proportions for each institution of
113 higher education on its Internet web site. Participating institutions of
114 higher education shall make awards (A) to eligible full-time students
115 in an amount up to four thousand five hundred dollars, and (B) to
116 eligible part-time students in an amount that is prorated according to

117 the number of credits each student will earn for completing the course
118 or courses in which such student is enrolled, such that a student
119 enrolled in a course or courses earning (i) at least nine but less than
120 twelve credits is eligible for up to seventy-five per cent of the
121 maximum award, and (ii) at least six but less than nine credits is
122 eligible for up to fifty per cent of the maximum award. Each
123 participating institution of higher education shall expend all of the
124 moneys received under the Roberta B. Willis Scholarship program as
125 direct financial assistance only for eligible educational costs.

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

145 (g) The Roberta B. Willis Scholarship Charter Oak grant shall be
146 available to any full-time or part-time undergraduate student enrolled
147 in Charter Oak State College. The Office of Higher Education shall
148 allocate any appropriation to Charter Oak State College to be used to
149 provide grants for eligible educational costs to residents of this state

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

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

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

183 to subsection (d) of this section, and (2) number of Connecticut
184 residents who were awarded grants.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2023	10a-173

Statement of Legislative Commissioners:

In Subsec. (a)(1)(A), "Prior to July 1, 2024," was added before "family contribution" for accuracy; in Subsec. (d), "and on and after July 1, 2024, based on student aid index" was removed from the second sentence for internal consistency; and in Subsec. (e), "prior to July 1, 2024," was added after "two hundred per cent of" in the second sentence for accuracy.

HED *Joint Favorable Subst. -LCO*