

HOUSE BILL NO. 185

INTRODUCED BY S. MORIGEAU, T. WOODS, S. WEBBER, S. STEWART-PEREGOY, R. SHAW,
C. SCHREINER, M. RYAN, G. PIERSON, Z. PERRY, A. OLSEN, N. MCCONNELL, K. MCCARTHY,
R. LYNCH, G. KIPP, M. HOPKINS, J. FLEMING, J. ECK, M. DUNWELL, K. DUDIK, A. CURTIS, Z. BROWN,
B. BENNETT, K. ABBOTT, D. SALOMON, D. SANDS, J. SMALL, J. WELBORN, J. BACHMEIER

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO REDUCE OR ELIMINATE
TUITION COSTS FOR CERTAIN POSTSECONDARY PROGRAMS; AUTHORIZING THE BOARD OF
REGENTS TO ADMINISTER THE PROGRAM; PROVIDING PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS INCLUDING
STUDENT ELIGIBILITY; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

NEW SECTION. Section 1. Short title. [Sections 1 through 3] may be cited as the "Montana Promise Act".

NEW SECTION. Section 2. Purpose. The purpose of [sections 1 through 3] is to increase college affordability and attainment for and decrease the amount of college debt incurred by Montana residents who utilize community and tribal colleges and 2-year institutions of the Montana university system.

NEW SECTION. Section 3. Montana promise grant program -- student eligibility -- administration.
(1) There is a Montana promise grant program for the purpose of providing grants to students who meet the criteria for certain postsecondary programs pursuant to subsection (2). The program is administered by the board of regents through the office of the commissioner of higher education. The board of regents shall adopt policies for the administration of the program consistent with [sections 1 through 3].

(2) To be eligible for a grant under the program, a student must:

(a) be enrolled at least half-time in a community or tribal college located in the state of Montana or in a 2-year institution of the Montana university system and taking courses that lead to:

- (i) the ability to transfer to another postsecondary institution entering as at least a second-year student;
- (ii) an associate degree offered by the institution; or

- 1 (iii) a professional credential offered by the institution;
- 2 (b) have been a resident of Montana for at least 12 months prior to applying for the grant program;
- 3 (c) have graduated from high school or received a secondary education equivalency certificate ~~no earlier~~
4 ~~than 1 year prior to applying for the grant program for the first time;~~
- 5 (d) have demonstrated academic ability through earning a cumulative grade point average of at least
6 2.5 in high school or through other measures as determined by the board of regents;
- 7 (e) have completed and submitted the free application for federal student aid for the current academic
8 year and accepted all federal and state aid grants available; and
- 9 (f) have not completed more than 60 credit hours or the equivalent at a postsecondary institution or
10 earned an associate degree.

11 (3) A student awarded a grant under the Montana promise grant program may receive a grant for no
12 more than 2 years and is eligible for grants only if the student is making satisfactory progress as determined by
13 the board of regents in courses described in subsection (2)(a) ~~and~~, maintaining a cumulative grade point average
14 of at least ~~2.5~~ 2.7, AND CONTRIBUTING A MINIMUM OF 8 HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE EACH SEMESTER.

15 (4) Montana promise grants must be awarded based on each term for which a student is eligible. The
16 amount of the grant must be the greater of ~~\$50~~ \$75 per enrolled credit and the amount of tuition remaining due
17 after any other federal, state, or private aid grants or waivers have reduced the tuition amount.

18 (5) The total amount in grants awarded under this section may not exceed \$2 million in each fiscal year
19 or any lesser amount appropriated by the legislature. If the amount of funding is not sufficient to provide grants
20 to all eligible students, the board of regents may adopt policies for the prioritization of grants BASED ON:

21 (A) FINANCIAL NEED; AND

22 (B) RECENCY OF GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL OR COMPLETION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EQUIVALENCY
23 CERTIFICATION.

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25 NEW SECTION. Section 4. Appropriation. There is appropriated ~~\$2 million~~ \$1 in each year of the
26 biennium beginning July 1, 2017, from the general fund to the board of regents for the purposes of the Montana
27 promise grant program pursuant to [sections 1 through 3].

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29 NEW SECTION. Section 5. Notification to tribal governments. The secretary of state shall send a
30 copy of [this act] to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell

1 Chippewa tribe.

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3 NEW SECTION. Section 6. Codification instruction. [Sections 1 through 3] are intended to be codified
4 as an integral part of Title 20, chapter 26, part 6, and the provisions of Title 20, chapter 26, part 6, apply to
5 [sections 1 through 3].

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7 NEW SECTION. Section 7. Effective date. [This act] is effective July 1, 2017.

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