STATE OF NEW YORK

7301

2023-2024 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 19, 2023

Introduced by Sen. SCARCELLA-SPANTON -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Higher Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to establishing the New York state veteran student loan forgiveness program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new section 679-k to read as follows:

§ 679-k. New York state veteran student loan forgiveness program. 1. Definition. For the purposes of this section, "veteran" shall be a member of the armed forces of the United States who served and was honorably discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable from such service, and presents an authorized veteran identification card, and who is a resident of the state of New York.

2. Purpose. The president shall grant student loan forgiveness awards for the purpose of alleviating the burden of student loan debt for veterans. Such awards shall be made on a competitive basis, in accordance with rules and regulations promulgated by the corporation in consultation with the division of military and naval affairs, for such purposes, to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria. Such rules and regulations shall include provisions for the consideration of applicants who are economically disadvantaged.

3. Eligibility. To be eligible for an award pursuant to this section, applicants shall: (a) have graduated and obtained a degree from an approved New York state college or university; (b) have an outstanding student loan debt from obtaining such degree; (c) be employed full-time in New York state at the time of application; (d) agree to reside in New York state for no less than five years; (e) not receive or have received student loan forgiveness or discharge from the federal government; and (f) comply with subdivision five of section six hundred sixty-one of this part.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

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4. Awards. Awards shall be granted to qualified applicants in the amount of up to ten thousand dollars per year, per applicant, not to exceed a duration of five years and not to exceed the total amount of such applicant's student loan debt. The corporation shall grant such awards within amounts appropriated for such purposes and based on the availability of funds. No one applicant shall receive more than a total of fifty thousand dollars upon the end of a five-year period.

5. Priority. First priority shall be given to applicants who have received payment of an award pursuant to this section in a prior year and remain eligible. Second priority shall be given to an applicant who can demonstrate economic need and applicants having been awarded a disability rating of forty percent or higher from the federal department of veteran's affairs or from the United States department of defense, where that disability was incurred in the line of duty in the active military, naval or air service, as documented by the corporation. If larger numbers of applicants are eligible pursuant to this subdivision than funds available, applicants shall be chosen pursuant to rules and regulations promulgated by the corporation. Provided, however, that each applicant chosen shall receive an award of up to ten thousand dollars in each year such applicant is accepted into the program.

6. Rules and regulations. The corporation is authorized to promulgate rules and regulations, and may promulgate emergency regulations, necessary for the implementation of the provisions of this section.

§ 2. This act shall take effect on the ninetieth day after it shall have become a law.