

Senate Bill 496

By: Senators Hill of the 4th, Seabaugh of the 28th, Harp of the 29th, Douglas of the 17th,  
Smith of the 52nd and others

**AS PASSED SENATE**

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

1 To amend Part 7 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia  
2 Annotated, relating to HOPE scholarships and grants, so as to establish the HOPE college  
3 opportunity grant; to amend Code Section 20-3-519 of the Official Code of Georgia  
4 Annotated, relating to definitions relative to HOPE scholarships and grants, so as to revise  
5 certain definitions; to provide for a definition; to provide for eligibility requirements; to  
6 provide for scholarship amounts; to provide for related matters; to repeal conflicting laws;  
7 and for other purposes.

8 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

9 **SECTION 0.5.**

10 Code Section 20-3-519 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to definitions  
11 relative to HOPE scholarships and grants, is amended by revising subparagraph (A) of  
12 paragraphs (6) and (6.1) as follows:

13 "(A) Located in Georgia and is currently or within the last two years has been  
14 accredited by:

- 15 (i) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;
- 16 (ii) The Georgia Accrediting Commission;
- 17 (iii) The Georgia Association of Christian Schools;
- 18 (iv) The Association of Christian Schools International;
- 19 (v) The Georgia Private School Accreditation Council; or
- 20 (vi) The Southern Association of Independent Schools;

21 provided, however, that this shall not apply to any accrediting agency listed in this  
22 subparagraph which includes as part of its accreditation standards minimum salary  
23 requirements for any school system administrator, either directly or relative to the  
24 salary of any other employee; or"

25 "(A) Located in Georgia and accredited as such by:

- 26 (i) The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools;
- 27 (ii) The Georgia Accrediting Commission;

28 (iii) The Georgia Association of Christian Schools;  
 29 (iv) The Association of Christian Schools International;  
 30 (v) The Georgia Private School Accreditation Council;  
 31 (vi) The Accrediting Commission for Independent Study; or  
 32 (vii) The Southern Association of Independent Schools;  
 33 provided, however, that this shall not apply to any accrediting agency listed in this  
 34 subparagraph which includes as part of its accreditation standards minimum salary  
 35 requirements for any school system administrator, either directly or relative to the  
 36 salary of any other employee; or"

37 **SECTION 1.**

38 Part 7 of Article 7 of Chapter 3 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated,  
 39 relating to HOPE scholarships and grants, is amended by adding a new paragraph to Code  
 40 Section 20-3-519, relating to definitions, to read as follows:

41 "(13.1) 'HOPE college opportunity grant' means a Helping Outstanding Pupils  
 42 Educationally college opportunity grant for education awarded in accordance with Code  
 43 Section 20-3-519.4."

44 **SECTION 2.**

45 Said part is further amended by revising Code Section 20-2-519.4, which is reserved, as  
 46 follows:

47 "20-3-519.4.

48 (a) To be eligible for a HOPE college opportunity grant, a student seeking an associate or  
 49 baccalaureate degree at an eligible public postsecondary institution shall:

50 (1) Meet residency requirements by:

51 (A) Meeting the requirements to be classified as a legal resident of Georgia as  
 52 established by the program regulations promulgated by the Georgia Student Finance  
 53 Commission which shall be based upon the in-state tuition policy of the board of  
 54 regents and the in-state tuition guidelines set by the Technical College System of  
 55 Georgia; and

56 (B)(i) If the student was classified as a legal resident of Georgia at the time of  
 57 graduation from high school or from a home study program meeting the requirements  
 58 of Code Section 20-2-690, then the student must have met the requirements set forth  
 59 in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph for a period of at least 12 months immediately  
 60 prior to the first day of classes for which the HOPE college opportunity grant is to be  
 61 awarded; or

62 (ii) If the student was not classified as a legal resident at the time of graduation from  
63 high school or from a home study program meeting the requirements of Code Section  
64 20-2-690, then the student must have met the requirements set forth in subparagraph  
65 (A) of this paragraph for a period of at least 24 months immediately prior to the first  
66 day of classes for which the HOPE college opportunity grant is to be awarded.

67 Notwithstanding the foregoing, a dependent child of military personnel stationed in  
68 Georgia shall be deemed to be a legal resident of Georgia and, subject to meeting all other  
69 eligibility requirements, shall be eligible to receive the HOPE college opportunity grant as  
70 a freshman if the student graduated from a high school located in Georgia or from a home  
71 study program meeting the requirements of Code Section 20-2-690 that is located in  
72 Georgia;

73 (2) Meet enrollment standards by being admitted, enrolled, and classified as a full-time  
74 undergraduate student in a matriculated status at an eligible public postsecondary  
75 institution and by maintaining satisfactory academic progress in a course of study in  
76 accordance with the standards and practices used for federal Title IV programs by the  
77 eligible public postsecondary institution in which the student is enrolled;

78 (3) Meet further eligibility standards established by the Georgia Student Finance  
79 Commission which shall include criteria aimed at serving the neediest students; and

80 (4) Be a recipient of federal educational assistance funds awarded under the federal Pell  
81 Grant Program for any semester or quarter for which a HOPE college opportunity grant  
82 is sought under this Code section.

83 (b)(1) Except as set out in paragraph (2) of this subsection, a student may receive the  
84 HOPE college opportunity grant until the first of these events:

85 (A) The student has earned a baccalaureate degree; or

86 (B) The student has attempted at any postsecondary institution a total of 190 quarter  
87 hours or 127 semester hours.

88 (2) A student enrolled in an undergraduate or first professional degree program designed  
89 to be more than 190 quarter hours or 127 semester hours in length is eligible to receive  
90 the HOPE college opportunity grant for a total of 225 attempted quarter hours or 150  
91 attempted semester hours.

92 (c) A HOPE college opportunity grant may be applied to any portion of the student's cost  
93 of attendance as defined by the eligible public postsecondary institution that the student is  
94 attending.

95 (d) Subject to appropriations by the General Assembly, the Georgia Student Finance  
96 Commission shall determine HOPE college opportunity grant award amounts, which may

97 be determined on a sliding scale based on income. It is the intent of the General Assembly  
98 that the HOPE college opportunity grants awarded pursuant to this Code section be targeted  
99 at the neediest students. If at any time the commission determines that the funds available  
100 to the commission are not sufficient to pay the grant to all eligible students, grants payable  
101 for the remaining school terms shall be reduced by the commission on a pro rata basis.  
102 (e) The funds necessary to provide for the HOPE college opportunity grants provided for  
103 in this Code section shall come from and be subject to the amounts appropriated by the  
104 General Assembly and provisions relating to the scholarship shortfall reserve subaccount  
105 in Code Section 50-27-13.  
106 Reserved."

107 **SECTION 3.**

108 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.