

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2013

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SENATE DRS35252-LH-156A (03/15)

Short Title: Optometry Education Grant Program.

(Public)

Sponsors: Senator Curtis (Primary Sponsor).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NORTH CAROLINA OPTOMETRY EDUCATION GRANT
3 PROGRAM TO PROVIDE STATE GRANTS TO STUDENTS WHO ARE NORTH
4 CAROLINA RESIDENTS ATTENDING CERTAIN APPROVED OUT-OF-STATE
5 EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PURSUE A DOCTORATE OF OPTOMETRY
6 DEGREE AND TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE GRANTS.

7 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

8 SECTION 1. Chapter 116 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
9 Article to read:

10 "Article 35

11 "North Carolina Optometry Education Grant Program.

12 "**§ 116-290. North Carolina Optometry Education Grant Program.**

13 (a) Definitions. – The following definitions apply in this Article:

14 (1) Academic year. – A combination of school terms consisting of two
15 semesters, two trimesters, or the equivalent thereof beginning with the fall
16 term of the year.

17 (2) Approved institution. – The Pennsylvania College of Optometry of Salus
18 University, the Southern College of Optometry, the University of Alabama
19 at Birmingham School of Optometry, or the University of Houston.

20 (3) Authority. – The State Education Assistance Authority created under Article
21 23 of Chapter 116 of the General Statutes.

22 (4) Optometry Education Program. – A doctor of optometry program offered by
23 an approved institution that qualifies a student to practice as a licensed
24 optometrist.

25 (b) Establishment of Grant Program. – There is established the North Carolina
26 Optometry Education Grant Program. The purpose of the North Carolina Optometry Education
27 Grant Program is to provide grants to qualified North Carolina students pursuing a doctorate of
28 optometry degree.

29 (c) Eligibility of Students. – A student is eligible for a State grant under this section for
30 an academic year if the student meets the following criteria:

31 (1) The student qualifies as a North Carolina resident for tuition purposes under
32 G.S. 116-143.

33 (2) The student is enrolled or accepted for enrollment on a full-time basis in an
34 optometry education program at an approved institution.

35 (3) The student has complied with the registration requirements of the Military
36 Selective Service Act or is exempt from the registration requirements.



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1 (d) Administration. – The State grants provided for in this section shall be administered
2 by the Authority pursuant to rules adopted by the Authority not inconsistent with this section.
3 The Authority shall pay the State grant to each student eligible under this section. The amount
4 of the grant for each student shall be eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000) per academic year. The
5 grant shall be paid directly to the student on or after July 1 following the completion of the
6 academic year. The Authority shall not remit any grant until it receives proper certification
7 from an institution that the student applying for the grant is an eligible student.

8 (e) Shortfall. – In the event there are not sufficient funds to provide each eligible
9 student with a full grant, each eligible student shall receive a pro rata share of funds for the
10 grant then available for the appropriate academic year within the fiscal period covered by the
11 current appropriation.

12 (f) Reversion. – Any remaining funds shall revert to the General Fund.

13 (g) Student enrollment documented. – The Authority shall document the number of
14 eligible students that are enrolled in approved institutions and the State funds collected by
15 students at each approved institution under this section. The Authority shall report those
16 findings to the Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittees on
17 Education and the Joint Legislative Education Oversight Committee."

18 **SECTION 2.** There is appropriated from the General Fund to the State Education
19 Assistance Authority the sum of eight hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$825,000) for the
20 2013-2014 fiscal year and the sum of eight hundred twenty-five thousand dollars (\$825,000)
21 for the 2014-2015 fiscal year to fund the North Carolina Optometry Education Grant Program
22 established in G.S. 116-290, as enacted by Section 1 of this act.

23 **SECTION 3.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2013, and applies to the
24 2013-2014 academic year and each subsequent academic year.