

SENATE, No. 3348

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JUNE 3, 2024

Sponsored by:

Senator LATHAM TIVER

District 8 (Atlantic and Burlington)

Senator ANGELA V. MCKNIGHT

District 31 (Hudson)

SYNOPSIS

“Securing Access to Funding for Educating Drivers (SAFE) Act”; establishes NJ Behind-The-Wheel Driver Education Scholarship Program; appropriates \$1 million.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



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1 AN ACT establishing the New Jersey Behind-The-Wheel Driver
2 Education Scholarship Program, supplementing Title 39 of the
3 Revised Statutes, and making an appropriation.

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5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. This act shall be known and may be cited as the “Securing
9 Access to Funding for Educating Drivers (SAFE) Act.”

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11 2. As used in P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the
12 Legislature as this bill):

13 “Commission” means the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
14 Commission.

15 “Low-income household” means a household that is at or below
16 twice the poverty threshold as that threshold is determined annually
17 by the United States Census Bureau.

18 “Program” means the New Jersey Behind-The-Wheel Driver
19 Education Scholarship Program established pursuant to section 3 of
20 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

21 “Scholarship” means a scholarship awarded under the New
22 Jersey Behind-The-Wheel Driver Education Scholarship Program.

23 “Six-hour behind-the-wheel driver education course” means the
24 six-hour behind the wheel driver education course conducted by a
25 drivers' school duly licensed pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1951,
26 c.216 (C.39:12-1 et seq.) that is required for individuals between
27 the ages of 16 and 17 pursuant to section 6 of P.L.1977, c.25
28 (C.39:3-13.2a) to obtain a special learner’s permit.

29
30 3. a. There is established within the New Jersey Motor Vehicle
31 Commission the New Jersey Behind-The-Wheel Driver Education
32 Scholarship Program. The purpose of the program shall be to
33 provide scholarships to eligible individuals from low-income
34 households to cover the costs of the six-hour behind-the-wheel
35 driver education course.

36 b. Scholarships awarded under the program shall be in an
37 amount to cover the full cost of the six-hour behind-the-wheel
38 driver education course conducted by a drivers' school duly licensed
39 pursuant to the provisions of P.L.1951, c.216 (C.39:12-1 et seq.) or
40 \$500, whichever is less.

41 c. To qualify for a scholarship under the program an individual
42 shall demonstrate to the commission that the individual:

43 (1) is a resident of the State;

44 (2) is between the age of 16 and 17;

45 (3) is from a low-income household;

46 (4) has passed the written examination required pursuant to
47 subsection b. of R.S.39:3-10, which may be offered as part of a
48 course of driving education approved by the State Department of

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1 Education and conducted in a public, parochial, or private school of
2 this State, pursuant to section 1 of P.L.1950, c.127 (C.39:3-13.1);
3 and

4 (5) meets any other eligibility criteria that the commission deems
5 appropriate.

6 d. Interested individuals that meet the eligibility requirements in
7 subsection c. of this section shall submit an application to the
8 commission in a form and manner determined by the commission.

9 e. The commission shall provide scholarships on a rolling basis,
10 subject to the availability of funds, to individuals who have
11 submitted an application to the commission pursuant to subsection
12 d. of this section and meet the eligibility criteria pursuant to
13 subsection c. of this section. The commission shall determine
14 whether a scholarship will be awarded within 30 days of the
15 commission's receipt of an application.

16 f. The commission shall submit an annual report to the
17 Governor, and the Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991,
18 c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), containing the following information:

19 (1) the number of scholarship applications submitted during the
20 year;

21 (2) the number of scholarships provided during the year;

22 (3) the total amount of monies provided in the form of
23 scholarships under the program during the year; and

24 (4) a recommendation on the establishment of a permanent
25 source of funding for the program.

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27 4. Notwithstanding any provision of the "Administrative
28 Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.) or any other
29 law to the contrary, the commission may adopt, immediately upon
30 filing with the Office of Administrative Law and no later than the
31 90th day after the effective date of P.L. , c. (C.) (pending
32 before the Legislature as this bill), such rules and regulations as the
33 commission deems necessary to implement the provisions of
34 P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill),
35 which regulations shall be effective for a period not to exceed 12
36 months. The regulations shall, at a minimum, set forth the
37 requirements for application submissions and the criteria for
38 application selections. The regulations shall thereafter be amended,
39 adopted, or readopted by the commission in accordance with the
40 provisions of the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410
41 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.).

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43 5. There is appropriated from the General Fund to the New
44 Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission the sum of \$1,000,000 to
45 provide scholarships pursuant to section 3 of P.L. ,
46 c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as this bill).

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48 6. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

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This bill establishes the New Jersey Behind-The-Wheel Driver Education Scholarship Program (program) within the New Jersey Motor Vehicle Commission (commission). The purpose of the program is to provide scholarships to eligible individuals from low-income households to cover the costs of the six-hour behind-the-wheel driver education course. As defined in the bill, “six-hour behind-the-wheel driver education course” means the six-hour behind the wheel driver education course conducted by a drivers' school duly licensed by the commission that is required for individuals between the ages of 16 and 17 to obtain a special learner’s permit.

Scholarships awarded under the program are required to be in an amount to cover the full cost of the six-hour behind-the-wheel driver education course or \$500, whichever is less. To qualify for a scholarship under the program an individual is required to demonstrate to the commission that the individual: (1) is a resident of the State; (2) is between the age of 16 and 17; (3) is from a low-income household; (4) has passed the required written examination, which may be offered as part of a course of driving education approved by the State Department of Education and conducted in a New Jersey public, parochial, or private school; and (5) meets any other eligibility criteria that the commission deems appropriate.

Interested individuals that meet the eligibility requirements are required to submit an application to the commission in a form and manner determined by the commission. The commission is required to provide scholarships on a rolling basis, subject to the availability of funds, to individuals who have submitted an application to the commission and meet the eligibility criteria for a scholarship under the program.

The bill requires the commission to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature containing certain information as described in the bill.

Finally, the bill appropriates from the General Fund to the commission the sum of \$1 million to provide scholarships under the program.