

## SENATE BILL No. 477

By Senator Corson

2-4

1 AN ACT concerning postsecondary education; relating to scholarship  
2 programs; enacting the Kansas first responder scholarship act;  
3 providing tuition assistance to certain first responders and dependents  
4 of such first responders.  
5

6 *Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

7 Section 1. (a) This section shall be known and may be cited as the  
8 Kansas first responder scholarship act.

9 (b) As used in the Kansas first responder scholarship act:

10 (1) "Dependent" means a birth child, adopted child or stepchild of a  
11 first responder or any child other than the foregoing who is actually a  
12 dependent, in whole or in part, of the first responder and related to such  
13 first responder by marriage or consanguinity.

14 (2) "Emergency medical service provider" means the same as defined  
15 in K.S.A. 65-6112, and amendments thereto.

16 (3) "Firefighter" means an individual who is employed by any city,  
17 county, township or other political subdivision of Kansas, assigned to the  
18 fire department thereof and engaged in the fighting and extinguishment of  
19 fires and the protection of life and property from such fires.

20 (4) "First responder" includes emergency medical service providers,  
21 firefighters, public safety telecommunicators and law enforcement officers  
22 who are employed as a first responder in Kansas and reside in Kansas.

23 (5) "Law enforcement officer" means the same as defined in K.S.A.  
24 74-5602, and amendments thereto.

25 (6) "Postsecondary educational institution" means the same as  
26 defined in K.S.A. 74-3201b, and amendments thereto.

27 (7) "Public safety telecommunicator" means an individual employed  
28 by a state or local government whose primary duties involve receiving,  
29 processing and transmitting emergency and nonemergency  
30 communications to law enforcement officers, emergency medical service  
31 providers, firefighters or other public safety services.

32 (8) "State board" means the state board of regents.

33 (9) "Tuition" means the charges and cost of tuition set by the  
34 governing body of a postsecondary educational institution, including  
35 course fees, activity fees, technology fees and any other mandatory fees  
36 charged by such institution to full-time students as a condition of

1 enrollment. "Tuition" does not include the cost of room, board, books or  
2 other educational materials, equipment or supplies.

3 (c) (1) There is hereby established the Kansas first responder  
4 scholarship program. Such program shall be administered by the state  
5 board. The purpose of the program is to provide tuition assistance to  
6 certain first responders and their dependents.

7 (2) Up to the aggregate limit for the awards established for each  
8 academic year by the state board based on the annual appropriated  
9 amounts for the reimbursements paid pursuant to subsection (d), every  
10 Kansas postsecondary educational institution shall provide for enrollment  
11 without charge of tuition to first responders or dependents who meet the  
12 requirements of subsection (d). The award provided by this section shall  
13 not exceed 10 semesters of undergraduate instruction, or the equivalent  
14 thereof, at all such institutions.

15 (3) Subject to appropriations, any postsecondary educational  
16 institution that provides for enrollment without charge of tuition to a first  
17 responder or dependent may file a claim with the state board for  
18 reimbursement of the amount of such tuition. The state board shall include  
19 in its budget estimates pursuant to K.S.A. 75-3717, and amendments  
20 thereto, a request for appropriations to cover tuition claims pursuant to this  
21 section. The state board shall be responsible for payment of  
22 reimbursements to such postsecondary educational institutions upon  
23 certification by each such institution of the amount of reimbursement that  
24 such institution is entitled to receive. Payments to postsecondary  
25 educational institutions shall be made upon vouchers approved by the state  
26 board or the state board's designee and upon warrants of the director of  
27 accounts and reports. Payments may be made by issuance of a single  
28 warrant to each postsecondary educational institution at which one or more  
29 eligible first responders and dependents are enrolled for the total amount  
30 of tuition not charged for enrollment at that institution. The director of  
31 accounts and reports shall cause such warrant to be delivered to the  
32 postsecondary educational institution at which any such eligible first  
33 responders and dependents are enrolled. If an eligible first responder or  
34 dependent discontinues attendance before the end of any semester after the  
35 postsecondary educational institution has received payment under this  
36 subsection, such institution shall pay to the state the entire amount that  
37 such eligible first responder or dependent would otherwise qualify to be  
38 refunded, not to exceed the amount of the payment made by the state on  
39 behalf of such first responder or dependent for the semester. All amounts  
40 paid to the state by postsecondary educational institutions under this  
41 subsection shall be deposited in the state treasury and credited to the state  
42 general fund.

43 (d) To qualify for an award as provided in this section, a first

1 responder with at least six years of service or the dependent of a first  
2 responder with at least 12 years of service shall:

3 (1) Provide proof that the first responder is licensed or certified with  
4 the appropriate professional licensing or certifying body and compliant  
5 with ongoing training requirements on a form and in a manner determined  
6 by the state board;

7 (2) meet admission requirements of the postsecondary educational  
8 institution where the first responder or dependent seeks to enroll;

9 (3) have not earned a baccalaureate degree at the time of enrollment;

10 (4) provide proof that the first responder is employed as a first  
11 responder in Kansas and resides in Kansas. Such proof shall be provided  
12 each year that the first responder or dependent applies for and receives a  
13 tuition award pursuant to this section; and

14 (5) first apply for all other federal and state student financial aid  
15 before applying for a first responder tuition award, including, but not  
16 limited to, filing the United States department of education free application  
17 for federal student aid and submit confirmation of such application on a  
18 form and in a manner determined by the state board.

19 (e) The state board may adopt rules and regulations to implement and  
20 administer the Kansas first responder scholarship program.

21 Sec. 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
22 publication in the statute book.