

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 3397

To establish a program that enables college-bound residents of the Northern Mariana Islands to have greater choices among institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 29, 2009

Mr. SABLAN introduced the following bill; which was referred to the
Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To establish a program that enables college-bound residents of the Northern Mariana Islands to have greater choices among institutions of higher education, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Northern Mariana Is-

5 lands College Access Act of 2009”.

6 **SEC. 2. PURPOSE.**

7 It is the purpose of this Act to establish a program

8 that enables college-bound residents of the Northern Mar-

1 iana Islands to have greater choices among institutions of
2 higher education.

3 **SEC. 3. PUBLIC SCHOOL GRANTS.**

4 (a) GRANTS.—

5 (1) IN GENERAL.—From amounts appropriated
6 under subsection (i), the Governor shall award
7 grants to eligible institutions that enroll eligible stu-
8 dents to pay the difference between the tuition and
9 fees charged for in-State students and the tuition
10 and fees charged for out-of-State students on behalf
11 of each eligible student enrolled in the eligible insti-
12 tution.

13 (2) MAXIMUM STUDENT AMOUNTS.—The
14 amount paid on behalf of an eligible student under
15 this section shall be—

16 (A) not more than \$15,000 for any one
17 award year (as defined in section 481 of the
18 Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
19 1088)); and

20 (B) not more than \$75,000 in the aggre-
21 gate.

22 (3) PRORATION.—The Governor shall prorate
23 payments under this section for students who attend
24 an eligible institution on less than a full-time basis.

1 (b) REDUCTION FOR INSUFFICIENT APPROPRIA-
2 TIONS.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—If the funds appropriated
4 pursuant to subsection (i) for any fiscal year are in-
5 sufficient to award a grant in the amount deter-
6 mined under subsection (a) on behalf of each eligible
7 student enrolled in an eligible institution, then the
8 Governor, in consultation with the Secretary of Edu-
9 cation, shall—

10 (A) first, ratably reduce the amount of the
11 tuition and fee payment made on behalf of each
12 eligible student who has not received funds
13 under this section for a preceding year; and

14 (B) after making reductions under sub-
15 paragraph (A), ratably reduce the amount of
16 the tuition and fee payments made on behalf of
17 all other eligible students.

18 (2) ADJUSTMENTS.—The Governor, in con-
19 sultation with the Secretary of Education, may ad-
20 just the amount of tuition and fee payments made
21 under paragraph (1) based on—

22 (A) the financial need of the eligible stu-
23 dents to avoid undue hardship to the eligible
24 students; or

1 (B) undue administrative burdens on the
2 Governor.

3 (3) FURTHER ADJUSTMENTS.—Notwith-
4 standing paragraphs (1) and (2), the Governor may
5 prioritize the making or amount of tuition and fee
6 payments under this subsection based on the income
7 and need of eligible students.

8 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9 (1) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term “eligi-
10 ble institution” means an institution that—

11 (A) is a public four-year institution of
12 higher education located in one of the several
13 States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico,
14 or Guam;

15 (B) is eligible to participate in the student
16 financial assistance programs under title IV of
17 the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C.
18 1070 et seq.); and

19 (C) enters into an agreement with the Gov-
20 ernor containing such conditions as the Gov-
21 ernor may specify, including a requirement that
22 the institution use the funds made available
23 under this section to supplement and not sup-
24 plant assistance that otherwise would be pro-

1 vided to eligible students from the Northern
2 Mariana Islands.

3 (2) ELIGIBLE STUDENT.—The term “eligible
4 student” means an individual who—

5 (A) was domiciled in the Northern Mar-
6 iana Islands for not less than the 12 consecu-
7 tive months preceding the commencement of the
8 freshman year at an institution of higher edu-
9 cation;

10 (B) graduated from a secondary school in
11 the Northern Mariana Islands, or received the
12 recognized equivalent of a secondary school di-
13 ploma while domiciled in the Northern Mariana
14 Islands, on or after January 1, 2008;

15 (C) begins the individual’s undergraduate
16 course of study within the three calendar years
17 (excluding any period of service on active duty
18 in the Armed Forces, or service under the
19 Peace Corps Act (22 U.S.C. 2501 et seq.) or
20 subtitle D of title I of the National and Com-
21 munity Service Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12571
22 et seq.)) of graduation from a secondary school,
23 or obtaining the recognized equivalent of a sec-
24 ondary school diploma;

1 (D) is enrolled or accepted for enrollment,
2 on at least a half-time basis, in a baccalaureate
3 degree or other program (including a program
4 of study abroad approved for credit by the insti-
5 tution at which such student is enrolled) lead-
6 ing to a recognized educational credential at an
7 eligible institution;

8 (E) if enrolled in an eligible institution, is
9 maintaining satisfactory progress in the course
10 of study the student is pursuing in accordance
11 with section 484(c) of the Higher Education
12 Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1091(c)); and

13 (F) has not completed the individual's first
14 undergraduate baccalaureate course of study.

15 (3) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
16 term “institution of higher education” has the
17 meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher
18 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

19 (4) GOVERNOR.—The term “Governor” means
20 the Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern
21 Mariana Islands.

22 (5) SECONDARY SCHOOL.—The term “sec-
23 ondary school” has the meaning given that term
24 under section 14101 of the Elementary and Sec-
25 ondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 8801).

1 (6) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means
2 the Secretary of Education.

3 (d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act shall be
4 construed to require an institution of higher education to
5 alter the institution’s admissions policies or standards in
6 any manner to enable an eligible student to enroll in the
7 institution.

8 (e) APPLICATIONS.—Each student desiring a tuition
9 payment under this section shall submit an application to
10 the eligible institution at such time, in such manner, and
11 accompanied by such information as the eligible institution
12 may require.

13 (f) ADMINISTRATION OF PROGRAM.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Governor shall carry
15 out the program under this section in consultation
16 with the Secretary. The Governor may enter into a
17 grant, contract, or cooperative agreement with an-
18 other public or private entity to administer the pro-
19 gram under this section if the Governor determines
20 that doing so is a more efficient way of carrying out
21 the program.

22 (2) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES.—The Gov-
23 ernor, in consultation with institutions of higher
24 education eligible for participation in the program
25 authorized under this section, shall develop policies

1 and procedures for the administration of the pro-
2 gram.

3 (3) MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT.—The Gov-
4 ernor and the Secretary shall enter into a Memo-
5 randum of Agreement that describes—

6 (A) the manner in which the Governor
7 shall consult with the Secretary with respect to
8 administering the program under this section;
9 and

10 (B) any technical or other assistance to be
11 provided to the Governor by the Secretary for
12 purposes of administering the program under
13 this section (which may include access to the in-
14 formation in the common financial reporting
15 form developed under section 483 of the Higher
16 Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1090)).

17 (g) GOVERNOR'S REPORT.—The Governor shall re-
18 port to Congress annually regarding—

19 (1) the number of eligible students attending
20 each eligible institution and the amount of the grant
21 awards paid to those institutions on behalf of the eli-
22 gible students;

23 (2) the extent, if any, to which a ratable reduc-
24 tion was made in the amount of tuition and fee pay-
25 ments made on behalf of eligible students; and

1 (3) the progress in obtaining recognized aca-
2 demic credentials of the cohort of eligible students
3 for each year.

4 (h) GAO REPORT.—Beginning on the date of the en-
5 actment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United
6 States shall monitor the effect of the program assisted
7 under this section on educational opportunities for eligible
8 students. The Comptroller General shall analyze whether
9 eligible students had difficulty gaining admission to eligi-
10 ble institutions because of any preference afforded in-
11 State residents by eligible institutions, and shall expedi-
12 tiously report any findings regarding such difficulty to
13 Congress and the Governor. In addition the Comptroller
14 General shall—

15 (1) analyze the extent to which there are an in-
16 sufficient number of eligible institutions to which
17 Northern Mariana Islands students can gain admis-
18 sion, including admission aided by assistance pro-
19 vided under this Act, due to—

20 (A) caps on the number of out-of-State
21 students the institution will enroll;

22 (B) significant barriers imposed by aca-
23 demic entrance requirements (such as grade
24 point average and standardized scholastic ad-
25 missions tests); and

1 (C) absence of admission programs benefit-
2 ting minority students; and

3 (2) report the findings of the analysis described
4 in paragraph (1) and the assessment described in
5 paragraph (2) to Congress and the Governor.

6 (i) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
7 are authorized to be appropriated to the Commonwealth
8 of the Northern Mariana Islands to carry out this section
9 \$15,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
10 2015, and such sums as may be necessary for each of the
11 succeeding fiscal years. Such funds shall remain available
12 until expended.

13 (j) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section shall take effect
14 with respect to payments for periods of instruction that
15 begin on or after January 1, 2010.

16 **SEC. 4. ASSISTANCE TO THE NORTHERN MARIANA COL-**
17 **LEGE.**

18 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of ap-
19 propriations under subsection (d), the Secretary of Edu-
20 cation shall provide financial assistance to the Northern
21 Marianas College for each fiscal year for which appropria-
22 tions are made available under such subsection to enable
23 the College to carry out activities authorized under this
24 section.

1 (b) SUBGRANT REQUIRED.—From the financial as-
2 sistance provided under subsection (a), the President and
3 Board of Regents of Northern Marianas College shall
4 award a grant to an eligible institution of higher education
5 to plan and implement a vocational training program at
6 Northern Marianas College.

7 (c) PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.—The vocational
8 training program established under subsection (b)—

9 (1) shall award certificates of completion in
10 areas that include—

11 (A) food preparation, food and beverage
12 services, and the culinary arts;

13 (B) hospitality management;

14 (C) carpentry;

15 (D) electrical skills;

16 (E) plumbing; and

17 (F) other construction skills; and

18 (2) may use funds for—

19 (A) personnel hiring and relocation;

20 (B) faculty and staff salaries;

21 (C) rental of office, classroom, storage,
22 and administrative space;

23 (D) rental or purchase of furniture, equip-
24 ment, supplies, and materials directly related to
25 classroom use;

1 (E) rental or purchase of furniture, equip-
2 ment, supplies, and materials directly related to
3 faculty or administrative use; and

4 (F) climate control of facilities, and oper-
5 ation and maintenance of facilities and equip-
6 ment.

7 (d) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There
8 are authorized to be appropriated to the Commonwealth
9 of the Northern Mariana Islands to carry out this section
10 \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2010 through
11 2015.

12 **SEC. 5. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS.**

13 (a) **PERSONNEL.**—The Secretary of Education shall
14 arrange for the assignment of an individual, pursuant to
15 subchapter VI of chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code,
16 to serve as an adviser to the Governor with respect to the
17 programs assisted under this Act.

18 (b) **ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES.**—The Governor
19 may use not more than 5 percent of the funds made avail-
20 able for a program under section 3 for a fiscal year to
21 pay the administrative expenses of a program under sec-
22 tion 3 for the fiscal year.

23 (c) **INSPECTOR GENERAL REVIEW.**—Each of the pro-
24 grams assisted under this Act shall be subject to audit
25 and other review by the Inspector General of the Depart-

1 ment of Education in the same manner as programs are
2 audited and reviewed under the Inspector General Act of
3 1978 (5 U.S.C. App.).

4 (d) GIFTS.—The Governor may accept, use, and dis-
5 pose of donations of services or property for purposes of
6 carrying out this Act.

7 (e) MAXIMUM STUDENT AMOUNT ADJUSTMENTS.—
8 The Governor shall establish rules to adjust the maximum
9 student amounts described in section 3(a)(2)(B) for eligi-
10 ble students described in section 3(c)(2) who transfer be-
11 tween the eligible institutions described in section
12 3(c)(1)(A).

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