

1 ENGROSSED HOUSE  
2 BILL NO. 1282

By: Caldwell (Chad) of the  
House

3 and

4 Rader of the Senate

5  
6  
7 [ scholarships - eligibility - program - awards -  
8 amounts - waivers - award - name - rules - names -  
9 effective date -  
10 emergency ]

11  
12

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

14 SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2401, is  
15 amended to read as follows:

16 Section 2401. Sections ~~4~~ 2401 through ~~10~~ 2407 of this ~~act~~ title  
17 shall be known and may be cited as the "Oklahoma ~~State Regents'~~  
18 ~~Academic Rising Scholars Award Act-~~".

19 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2402, is  
20 amended to read as follows:

21 Section 2402. A. There is hereby created the Oklahoma ~~State~~  
22 ~~Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program. The purpose of the  
23 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic Rising Scholars Award~~ Program is to  
24 retain top-ranked students from Oklahoma in Oklahoma colleges,

1 enable Oklahoma institutions of higher education to compete  
2 aggressively for top Oklahoma scholars, attract high-caliber out-of-  
3 state students to Oklahoma to attend colleges and universities, and  
4 enhance the academic quality in Oklahoma colleges and universities.  
5 The program shall provide participants funding for enrollment fees,  
6 tuition and other fees, room and board and required textbooks or  
7 materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or graduate  
8 study at accredited institutions of higher education in Oklahoma.

9 B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall  
10 administer the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
11 Rising Scholars Award Program.

12 SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2403, is  
13 amended to read as follows:

14 Section 2403. A. No person shall be eligible to participate in  
15 the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program  
16 unless the person:

17 1. Has complied with all of the rules promulgated by the  
18 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education pursuant to the  
19 provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars  
20 Award Act, Section 2401 et seq. of this title, for the award,  
21 regulation, and administration of scholarships; and

22 2. Qualifies as one of the following:

23 a. an Individual Applicant Qualified Student, which shall  
24 mean a student who is a resident of the State of

1 Oklahoma whose American College Testing Program score  
2 or whose Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within  
3 the 99.5 to 100.0 percentile levels as administered in  
4 the State of Oklahoma and whose grade point average  
5 and/or class rank is exceptional, as determined by the  
6 State Regents,

7 b. a Presidential Scholar, which shall mean a student  
8 selected by the Commission on Presidential Scholars  
9 administered by the United States Department of  
10 Education,

11 c. a National Merit Scholar, which shall mean a student  
12 designated as a National Merit Scholar by the National  
13 Merit Scholarship Corporation,

14 d. a National Merit Finalist, which shall mean a student  
15 designated as a National Merit Finalist by the  
16 National Merit Scholarship Corporation, or

17 e. after October 1, 1999, an Institutional Nominee, which  
18 shall mean a student nominated by an institution in  
19 The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education:

20 (1) whose American College Testing Program or  
21 Scholastic Aptitude Test score falls within the  
22 95.0 to 99.49 percentile levels, or

23 (2) who shows exceptional academic achievement as  
24 evidenced by factors, including, but not limited

1 to, grade point average, class rank, national  
2 awards, scholastic achievements, honors, and who  
3 shows exceptional promise based on documentation  
4 that may include, but not be limited to, teacher  
5 recommendations, extracurricular activities, and  
6 evidence of overcoming economic and social  
7 obstacles as determined by the State Regents.  
8 The State Regents shall ensure that standards of  
9 high academic ability are documented.  
10 Scholarship awards to Institutional Nominees  
11 shall become effective when appropriate  
12 documentation is verified by the State Regents.

13 B. No person shall be eligible to receive a scholarship  
14 pursuant to the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
15 Rising Scholars Award Program unless the person is enrolled as a  
16 full-time student at a public or private accredited institution of  
17 higher education in Oklahoma.

18 C. ~~The~~ For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraphs a  
19 through d of paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject  
20 to the availability of funds, the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~  
21 Rising Scholars Award Program shall provide a scholarship in an  
22 amount not to exceed the ~~average~~ costs of all enrollment fees,  
23 tuition and other fees, room and board, and all required textbooks  
24 or materials for up to five (5) years of undergraduate and/or

1 graduate study at an accredited public or private institution of  
2 higher education in Oklahoma ~~as provided in subsection E of this~~  
3 ~~section~~. The State Regents may establish separate scholarship award  
4 levels for each qualifying category.

5 1. If the student is attending an institution within The  
6 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the  
7 scholarship provided in this subsection, exclusive of any  
8 internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this  
9 subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the  
10 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

11 2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher  
12 education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this  
13 subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs  
14 for items specified in this subsection at an institution of The  
15 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of comparable type which  
16 has the highest general enrollment fees of its type of institution  
17 in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as determined  
18 annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

19 D. For a student who qualifies pursuant to subparagraph e of  
20 paragraph 2 of subsection A of this section and subject to the  
21 availability of funds, the Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program  
22 shall provide a scholarship in an amount not to exceed the average  
23 costs of all enrollment fees and other fees, room and board, and all  
24 required textbooks or materials for up to five (5) years of

1 undergraduate and/or graduate study at an accredited public or  
2 private institution of higher education in Oklahoma. The State  
3 Regents may establish separate scholarship award levels for each  
4 qualifying category.

5 1. If the student is attending an institution within The  
6 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the institution shall  
7 provide a tuition waiver not to exceed the average cost of tuition.  
8 The total funding for the scholarship and waiver provided for  
9 students attending an institution within The Oklahoma State System  
10 of Higher Education as provided in this subsection, exclusive of any  
11 internships, shall not exceed the costs for items specified in this  
12 subsection at the institution attended as determined annually by the  
13 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.

14 2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher  
15 education in Oklahoma, the scholarship shall include an amount not  
16 to exceed the average cost of tuition. The total funding for  
17 scholarships for students attending a private institution as  
18 provided in this subsection, exclusive of any internships, shall not  
19 exceed the costs for items specified in this subsection at an  
20 institution within The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of  
21 comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its  
22 type of institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education  
23 as determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
24 Education.

1        E. If a person identifies himself or herself as a student with  
2 a disability and requests consideration for a scholarship under the  
3 ~~Academic~~ Oklahoma Rising Scholars Award Program by means other than  
4 standard testing procedures, the State Regents shall determine what  
5 means of assessment are appropriate and upon the basis of said  
6 assessment results, determine what level of award, if any, shall be  
7 made.

8        ~~E. 1. If the student is attending an institution of The  
9 Oklahoma State System of Higher Education, the total funding for the  
10 scholarship provided in this section, exclusive of any internships,  
11 shall not exceed the costs for items specified in subsection C of  
12 this section at the institution attended as determined annually by  
13 the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education.~~

14        ~~2. If the student is attending a private institution of higher  
15 education, the total funding for the scholarship provided in this  
16 section, exclusive of any internships, shall not exceed the costs  
17 for items specified in subsection C of this section at an  
18 institution of The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education of  
19 comparable type which has the highest general enrollment fees of its  
20 type institution in The Oklahoma State System of Higher Education as  
21 determined annually by the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher  
22 Education.~~

23        SECTION 4.        AMENDATORY        70 O.S. 2021, Section 2404, is  
24 amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2404. A. Scholarships awarded under the Oklahoma ~~State~~  
2 ~~Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall be awarded to  
3 all eligible applicants without any limitation on the number of  
4 scholarships to be awarded in any year other than the amount of  
5 funds available for the scholarship program and the number of  
6 eligible applicants.

7 B. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may, at the  
8 time a scholarship is awarded to a student, set aside in the  
9 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Trust Fund  
10 funds for the full five-year commitment made to such eligible  
11 scholar. For all academic years, students who have previously  
12 received academic scholarships under the provisions of this act and  
13 who have continued at all times to fulfill the requirements for  
14 eligibility to receive academic scholarships provided in this act  
15 shall be given an absolute priority for continued financial support  
16 by the Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award  
17 Program superior to any students who are applying for such academic  
18 ~~scholarships~~ awards for the first time.

19 C. In addition to the qualifications specified in Section 2403  
20 of this title, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education may  
21 adopt additional criteria for selection and allocation of awards  
22 which may include, but are not limited to, consideration of high  
23 school academic performance and personal interviews. The Oklahoma  
24 State Regents for Higher Education shall annually report on the



1 number of former ~~Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program participants  
2 who stay in state as compared to those who leave Oklahoma within  
3 five (5) years of leaving the Award Program. In addition, the  
4 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education are hereby authorized to  
5 determine a maximum number of awards or a maximum amount of funding  
6 which may go to nonresident students. Such maximum limitations  
7 shall not exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the awards or amount  
8 of funding in any category provided in paragraph 2 of subsection A  
9 of Section 2403 of this title.

10 SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2405, is  
11 amended to read as follows:

12 Section 2405. The Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education  
13 may adopt rules and regulations, prescribe and provide appropriate  
14 forms for application, and employ such persons, contract for such  
15 services and make such additional expenditures as may be necessary  
16 or appropriate for implementing the provisions of the Oklahoma ~~State~~  
17 ~~Regents'~~ Academic Rising Scholars Award Act; provided, as part of  
18 the regulations adopted for administration of the provisions of the  
19 Oklahoma ~~State Regents'~~ Academic Rising Scholars Award Program, the  
20 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education shall require that each  
21 scholarship recipient make continuing and satisfactory progress  
22 toward a degree, including the establishment of an annual minimum  
23 grade point average and annual minimum credit hours to be maintained  
24 by the participants. Such regulations shall also provide for

1 revoking or rescinding assistance to any scholarship recipient who  
2 fails to meet such required standards. Such regulations shall also  
3 provide that the funds made available to students as part of the  
4 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program shall  
5 be paid directly to the institution of the student's choice, in  
6 trust for the student, and on the student's behalf, and shall  
7 contain appropriate restrictions and conditions that such monies are  
8 expended only for the purposes authorized by this act. Such  
9 regulations shall also provide for portability of award for a  
10 recipient among accredited institutions of higher education in  
11 Oklahoma in which the recipient may enroll as long as the recipient  
12 meets requirements of the program; however, waivers shall only be  
13 portable between institutions in The Oklahoma State System of Higher  
14 Education and waiver portability may be further limited by the  
15 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education rules and regulations.

16 SECTION 6. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2406, is  
17 amended to read as follows:

18 Section 2406. The Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising  
19 Scholars Award Act shall not be construed as granting any authority  
20 to control or influence the policies of any educational institution  
21 because it accepts students who are participating in the scholarship  
22 program, or to require any such institution to admit, or once  
23 admitted to continue in such institution, any participant in the  
24 scholarship program.

1 SECTION 7. AMENDATORY 70 O.S. 2021, Section 2407, is  
2 amended to read as follows:

3 Section 2407. As part of its duties in administering the  
4 Oklahoma ~~State Regents' Academic~~ Rising Scholars Award Program, the  
5 Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, in cooperation with the  
6 State Board of Education, shall encourage Oklahoma high school  
7 juniors who plan to attend college to take the Preliminary  
8 Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test  
9 in their junior year in high school as preparation for taking the  
10 Scholastic Aptitude Test their senior year in high school.

11 SECTION 8. This act shall become effective July 1, 2025.

12 SECTION 9. It being immediately necessary for the preservation  
13 of the public peace, health or safety, an emergency is hereby  
14 declared to exist, by reason whereof this act shall take effect and  
15 be in full force from and after its passage and approval.

16 Passed the House of Representatives the 13th day of March, 2025.

17  
18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 Presiding Officer of the House  
20 of Representatives

21 Passed the Senate the \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2025.

22  
23 \_\_\_\_\_  
24 Presiding Officer of the Senate