

H.B. NO. 1356

A BILL FOR AN ACT

RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD ALLOWANCE FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF HAWAII:

1 SECTION 1. Section 346-16, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
2 amended by amending the definition of "former foster youth" in
3 subsection (a) to read as follows:

4 ""Former foster youth" means a person formerly placed under
5 the jurisdiction of the department as a foster child by the
6 family court pursuant to chapter 587 who has attained the age of
7 eighteen[-] while under the placement responsibility of the
8 department or who was under the placement responsibility of the
9 department when a legally responsible caregiver was granted
10 custody."

11 SECTION 2. Section 346-17.4, Hawaii Revised Statutes, is
12 amended to read as follows:

13 "§346-17.4 Higher education board allowances for students.
14 (a) Eligible former foster [~~youths~~] youth shall be eligible for
15 higher education board allowances after reaching the age of
16 majority and the higher education board [~~payments~~] allowance for
17 that former foster youth shall be paid to an accredited

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1 institution of higher learning, another intermediary contracted
2 by the department, the former foster youth, or to the former
3 foster youth's former foster parents [7] or legal custodians, as
4 appropriate; provided that:

5 (1) The former foster youth is [~~twenty-one~~] twenty-six
6 years old or younger; [~~and~~]

7 (2) [~~Within one school year after high school completion,~~
8 ~~the former foster youth is attending or has been~~
9 ~~accepted to attend an accredited institution of higher~~
10 ~~learning on a full time basis, or on a part time basis~~
11 ~~for the first academic year, if approved by the~~
12 ~~director upon such terms and conditions as the director~~
13 ~~deems appropriate.] The former foster youth has made
14 an application for the higher education board allowance
15 through the age of twenty-one years old, except that a
16 former foster youth who is between the ages of twenty-
17 two years and twenty-six years on July 1, 2007, and
18 attending an institution of higher education, may apply
19 for a higher education board allowance after July 1,
20 2007, and no later than June 30, 2008; and~~

1 (3) The former foster youth is attending or has been
2 accepted to attend an accredited institution of higher
3 learning.

4 (b) The higher education board allowance may be issued
5 while the former foster youth is attending an accredited
6 institution of higher learning on a full-time basis or on a part-
7 time basis, in accordance with rules adopted by the department.

8 [~~b~~] (c) Reimbursement to foster parents for the former
9 foster youth's higher education board cost up to the maximum
10 allowable board amount shall be made retroactive to the former
11 foster youth's entry into an accredited institution of higher
12 learning on a full-time basis, but no earlier than July 1, 1987,
13 or on a part-time basis for the first academic year, but no
14 earlier than July 1, 1999.

15 [~~e~~] (d) Higher education board allowances may be applied
16 by the former foster youth to costs incurred in undertaking full-
17 time studies or part-time studies [~~for the first academic year,~~
18 ~~if approved by the director upon such terms and conditions as the~~
19 ~~director deems appropriate,~~] at an institution of higher
20 learning[-] in accordance with rules adopted by the department.

21 (e) The duration of the total higher education board
22 allowance shall not exceed sixty months.

JUSTIFICATION SHEET

DEPARTMENT: Human Services

TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT RELATING TO HIGHER EDUCATION BOARD ALLOWANCE FOR FORMER FOSTER YOUTH.

PURPOSE: To clarify the definition of a "former foster youth", to increase the time limit for application for a higher education board allowance from one year following high school graduation through the age of twenty-one years old, to provide former foster youth who are between the ages of 22 and 26 years on July 1, 2007 and already attending an institution of higher education the opportunity to apply for a higher education board allowance within a year, and to increase the maximum age for the benefit from 21 years to 26 years with a maximum benefit length of 60 months.

This bill also requests general fund appropriations for FY 2007-2008 and FY 2008-2009 to be expended by the Department for the purposes of this Act.

MEANS: Amend sections 346-16(a) and 346-17.4, Hawaii Revised Statutes.

JUSTIFICATION: The changes will allow the department to provide needed support for a former foster youth's education and successful transition to self-sufficiency. The increase in both the length of the time to apply for this benefit and the length of the benefit will allow more youth to complete a post-secondary education. This will increase chances of full-time and higher paid employment and decrease the need for other financial assistance to the former foster youth as an adult.

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Impact on the public: These changes will enhance the likelihood that a former foster youth will obtain an appropriate post-secondary education and make a successful transition to self-sufficiency, thereby decreasing the chances that the former foster youth will return to the system as a recipient of public assistance or child welfare services.

Impact on the department and other agencies: The department will be able to provide continued support during a former foster youth's transition to self-sufficiency.

GENERAL FUND: FY 2007-2008 \$287,247 and FY 2008-2009 \$349,140.

OTHER FUNDS: None.

PPBS PROGRAM DESIGNATION: HMS 303.

OTHER AFFECTED AGENCIES: None.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2007.