



DEPARTMENT OF AUDITS AND ACCOUNTS

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January 13, 2017

Honorable Stacey Evans
State Representative
511-C Coverdell Legislative Office Bldg.
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

SUBJECT: Fiscal Note
House Bill (LC 33 6736)

Dear Representative Evans:

This bill would expand eligibility for the Zell Miller grant to members of the Georgia National Guard and reservists. Currently, only students who have met HOPE grant eligibility requirements and have earned a 3.5 cumulative grade point average (GPA) are eligible for the Zell Miller grant. Under the proposed legislation, students who meet HOPE grant eligibility requirements and who are members of the Georgia National Guard or a Georgia reserve component of the U.S. armed forces would also be eligible for the Zell Miller grant without having to meet the 3.5 GPA requirement.

The cost of this bill would be approximately \$62,000, with the vast majority associated with Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) institution students. TCSG estimated additional annual costs of approximately \$61,000, while the Board of Regents (BOR) estimated additional annual costs of less than \$1,200.

According to TCSG, 155 National Guard members and reservists received the HOPE grant at a TCSG institution in academic year 2016. The HOPE grant covered approximately 75% of the total tuition costs of approximately \$248,000 for these students. As shown in Table 1, if these students had received the Zell Miller grant, the additional cost would have been \$61,204. TCSG noted that while it is difficult to predict future changes in behavior, the number of TCSG students receiving HOPE has been declining over the past few years.

Table 1. Additional TCSG Costs Associated with the Bill

Students	Credit Hours	Total Tuition (\$89 per Credit Hour)	Tuition Covered by HOPE Grant (\$67 per Credit Hour)	Additional Cost under Bill
155	2,782	\$247,598	\$186,394	\$61,204

According to BOR, four National Guard members and reservists received the HOPE grant at a University System of Georgia institution in fiscal year 2016. If these students had qualified for the Zell Miller grant, the additional award dollars needed would have been \$1,132.

Sincerely,

Greg S. Griffin
State Auditor

Teresa A. MacCartney, Director
Office of Planning and Budget

GSG/TAM/kc