

Summary of the Senate Committee on Education’s Meeting on S-191.

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S-191: An act relating to New American Advancement Grant Applicants

- The bill proposes to ensure those who “qualify for in-state tuition to the Community College of Vermont pursuant to subsection 2185(c)” are eligible to receive grants from the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation.
- Vermont Student Assistance Corporation: Established in 1965, VSAC is a public non-profit agency that provides grants and other resources to Vermonter’s to help them access education.
- 2185(c) defines eligibility as someone who:
 1. “qualifies as a refugee.”
 - Refugees have permission to stay and work in the United States. They must apply for refugee status from outside the United States. After a year of being in the US you can apply for lawful permanent residency status.
 2. “is granted parole to enter the United States.”
 - Parolees are admitted to the United States for a fixed temporary period of time. After that time expires, they must apply for other statuses, most commonly asylee status.
 3. “is issued a special immigrant visa pursuant to the Afghan Allies Protection Act of 2009.”

Comments, questions, and concerns:

- Fiscal impact: JFO and VSAC both testified that the fiscal impact of the bill on VSAC would be “minimal to negligible.”
- Vetting concerns: VSAC already has processes in place to verify the residency status of those covered within the bill.