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H.399

Introduced by Representatives Savage of Swanton and Gamache of Swanton

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Education; Native Americans of Vermont; scholarship

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to create a competitive scholarship program for Vermont Native Americans to attend the University of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges and to create a specialty vehicle registration plate to provide partial funding for this program.

An act relating to creating the Vermont Native American Scholarship Program

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 16 V.S.A. chapter 87, subchapter 9 is added to read:

Subchapter 9. Vermont Native American Scholarship Program

§ 2888n. VERMONT NATIVE AMERICANS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

(a) Definition. As used in this section, “Native American” means a member of a Vermont State Recognized Native American Tribe.

(b) Program creation. There is created the Vermont Native American Scholarship Program to encourage Native Americans to attend and obtain a degree, diploma, or certification from the University of Vermont or the

1 Vermont State Colleges.

2 (c)(1) Creation; Vermont Native American Scholarship Committee. There  
3 is created the Vermont Native American Scholarship Committee (Scholarship  
4 Committee), to be composed of the following members:

5 (A) the President of the University of Vermont or designee;

6 (B) the Chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges or designee;

7 (C) a representative of the Vermont Commission on Native American  
8 Affairs; and

9 (D) up to six further members that the Scholarship Committee may  
10 appoint in its discretion.

11 (2) Terms. Scholarship Committee members shall serve, commencing  
12 on August 1, three-year terms or until the member's earlier resignation or  
13 removal.

14 (3) Officers; subcommittees; rules. The Scholarship Committee shall  
15 elect a chair from among its members. It may elect other officers, establish  
16 subcommittees, and adopt procedural rules as it determines necessary and  
17 appropriate to perform its work.

18 (4) Quorum; voting; meetings.

19 (A) A majority of all members shall constitute a quorum.

1           (B) Action is taken by the Scholarship Committee if authorized by a  
2           majority of the members present and voting at any regular or special meeting at  
3           which a quorum is present.

4           (C) The Scholarship Committee may permit any or all members to  
5           participate in a regular or special meeting by, or conduct the meeting through  
6           the use of, any means of electronic communication by which all members  
7           participating may simultaneously or sequentially communicate with each other  
8           during the meeting. A member participating in a meeting by this means is  
9           deemed to be present in person at the meeting.

10           (5) Administrative support. The University of Vermont shall provide  
11           administrative support to the Scholarship Committee.

12           (6) Initial meeting. On or before September 1, 2017, the President of  
13           the University of Vermont shall convene the first meeting of the Scholarship  
14           Committee.

15           (7) Report. Notwithstanding 2 V.S.A. § 20(d), the Scholarship  
16           Committee shall report to the House and Senate Committees on Education and  
17           on Appropriations on or before January 15 annually regarding the Scholarship  
18           Committee's activities, applications received, and grants awarded under this  
19           chapter.

20           (d) Eligibility. The Scholarship Committee shall determine eligibility for  
21           scholarships, select scholarship recipients, and administer the Vermont Native

1 American Scholarship Program.

2 (1) The Scholarship Committee shall award scholarships on a competitive  
3 basis.

4 (2) An individual shall be eligible for a scholarship only if he or she:

5 (A) is a Native American;

6 (B) is a graduate of a Vermont public secondary school, or of a public  
7 school in another state that is designated as the public school for the student's  
8 district of residence, or of an approved or recognized independent secondary  
9 school located in Vermont; or was a home study student who is a resident of  
10 Vermont;

11 (C) is accepted and enrolled, or plans to enroll, in the University of  
12 Vermont or the Vermont State Colleges for the forthcoming academic  
13 term; and

14 (D) demonstrates a high likelihood of academic success and remains  
15 in academic good standing during enrollment.

16 (3) The Scholarship Committee shall award scholarships for either the full  
17 or partial cost of tuition for all or part of a scholarship recipient's enrollment in the  
18 University of Vermont or the Vermont State Colleges; provided, however, that a  
19 scholarship recipient shall submit documentation required by the Scholarship  
20 Committee in a form and at such times as determined by the Scholarship  
21 Committee.

1       (e) Funding. The Vermont Native American Scholarship Fund is  
2       established in the Office of the State Treasurer and shall be administered  
3       pursuant to 32 V.S.A. chapter 7, subchapter 5, except that interest earned on  
4       the Fund and any remaining balance shall be retained in the Fund. The Fund  
5       shall comprise the following:

6               (1) an annual appropriation by the General Assembly;

7               (2) fees from the purchase of specialty Vermont Native American  
8       Scholarship Fund Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles License Plates  
9       pursuant to 23 V. S.A. § 304d;

10              (3) notwithstanding 16 V.S.A. § 2885(f), disbursements from the Higher  
11       Education Endowment Trust Fund;

12              (4) disbursements from other scholarship funds managed by the  
13       University of Vermont and the Vermont State Colleges;

14              (5) appropriations from Vermont towns and municipalities;

15              (6) town scholarships under 16 V.S.A. § 2535; and

16              (7) grants or gifts made to the University of Vermont or the Vermont  
17       State Colleges that specifically designate the Vermont Native American  
18       Scholarship Fund.

1 Sec. 2. 23 V.S.A. § 304d is added to read:

2 § 304d. VERMONT NATIVE AMERICAN SCHOLARSHIP FUND

3 REGISTRATION PLATES

4 (a) Upon application, the Commissioner shall issue Vermont Native  
5 American Scholarship Fund (VNASF) registration plates for use only on  
6 vehicles registered at the pleasure car rate; on trucks registered for less than  
7 26,001 pounds, but excluding vehicles registered under the International  
8 Registration Plan; and on vehicles registered to State agencies under section  
9 376 of this title. VNASF registration plates shall be mounted on the front and  
10 rear of the vehicle. For design of the plates, the Commissioner shall use the  
11 graphic design recommended by the Vermont Commission on Native  
12 American Affairs to enhance public awareness of the State's interest in  
13 postsecondary education of Vermont State Recognized Native American  
14 Tribes. Applicants shall apply on forms prescribed by the Commissioner and  
15 shall pay an initial fee of \$20.00 in addition to the annual fee for registration.  
16 In subsequent years, in addition to the annual registration fee, the holder of a  
17 VNASF plate shall pay a renewal fee of \$20.00.

18 (b) Initial fees collected under subsection (a) of this section shall be  
19 allocated as follows:

20 (1) \$5.00 to the Transportation Fund; and

1           (2) \$15.00 to the Vermont Native American Scholarship Fund created in  
2           16 V.S.A. § 2888n.

3           (c) Renewal fees collected under subsection (a) of this section shall be  
4           allocated as follows:

5           (1) \$3.00 to the Transportation Fund; and

6           (2) \$17.00 to the Vermont Native American Scholarship Fund created in  
7           16 V.S.A. § 2888n.

8           (d) The Department of Corrections shall produce the VNASF registration  
9           plates for the Department of Motor Vehicles and the Department of Motor  
10          Vehicles shall pay for their production.

11          Sec. 3. EFFECTIVE DATE

12          This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017 and, pursuant to the terms of  
13          16 V.S.A. § 2888n, Vermont Native American Scholarship Program awards  
14          shall be available to scholarship recipients enrolled in the University of  
15          Vermont or Vermont State Colleges in the fall semester of 2019 and thereafter.