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Sen. Hillyard's Regents' Scholarship Bill Passes Senate Committee

Senate Bill 180, sponsored by Sen. Lyle Hillyard, reached an important milestone Tuesday, as it passed favorably out of the Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice Committee. The bill is on its way to the Senate floor for consideration. Twenty-one senators have signed as co-sponsors of the bill.

- SB 180 proposes to give every high school graduate, who has completed a rigorous core course of study with a minimum grade point average, a \$1,000 scholarship to be used at any Utah public institution of higher education.
- The bill offers an additional \$1,000 to such students who are also first-generation college students.
- Students completing the prescribed course of study with a 3.5 grade point average and scoring at least a 26 on the ACT test will qualify for a merit scholarship equal to 75 percent of tuition for two years of college at any Utah public higher education institution.
- An additional incentive, which encourages college savings, would match up to \$100 per year for contributions made to a student's Utah Educational Savings Plan (Utah's 529 Plan) account in grades 9-12, for a maximum of \$400.

The rigorous curriculum matches the course requirements of the Utah Scholars Initiative, which encourages students to complete, in grades 9-12: four years of English, four years of Algebra and higher math, three years of lab-based science (Biology, Chemistry, and Physics), three and one-half years of social studies, and two years of the same foreign language.

The Board of Regents is supportive of the bill and has included it as a top priority for this legislative session. The Regents hope to increase academic and financial preparation for college, enabling students to do well in their course of study and to persist to graduation. If approved, the scholarship would be administered by the Board of Regents and would be available this fall to high school students graduating in the class of 2008 who meet the requirements this year.

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