

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 296

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 296.

This bill directs the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to administer a scholarship program for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers studying or conducting research in the State in the fields of plasma physics and fusion energy science. The goal of the program is to support the education and career development of scholars who seek to advance the science and innovations needed to realize fusion as a safe, economical, and environmentally attractive energy source for the world's long-term energy needs. Under the program, the authority will award ten scholarships annually in the amount of \$12,500 each to qualified recipients.

The bill provides that in order to be eligible for the scholarship, a candidate must submit an application to the authority, including a written commitment from the institution of higher education at which the candidate is enrolled or employed to match the scholarship in the event the candidate is selected to receive one. A candidate must also submit a written statement to the authority, detailing the candidate's ongoing commitment to the fields of plasma physics and fusion energy science. The authority will appoint a three-member selection committee, to review scholarship applications and make final determinations on scholarship awards. Members of the selection committee will be selected based on their academic expertise in the field of plasma physics and fusion energy science. Each scholarship awarded will be contingent upon the recipient receiving an equal scholarship from the institution of higher education at which the scholar recipient is enrolled or employed, and remaining in good standing at the institution.

Under the bill, \$125,000 will be annually appropriated to the authority for the bill's purposes.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.