

The East Carolinian

New bill will provide incentives for recent grads

Serve your country and get benefits

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On May 22, North Carolina representative David Price (D-NC) and Connecticut representative Christopher Shays released legislation that peaked the interest of Congress, and if passed will benefit college and university students across the nation.

The bill proposed, the Roosevelt Scholars Legislation (H.R. 6160), will provide incentives for graduate students to serve in federal positions after graduation. These incentives include paid tuition, support for room and board and a monetary stipend.

In turn, Roosevelt Scholars would be required to complete an internship for a federal agency while in school and upon graduation, serve three to five years in a federal service job.



Media Credit: staff photo

The idea for the bill is modeled after the ROTC program, which provides students benefits while in school in exchange for service in a military branch after graduation.

"To attract tomorrow's leaders to public sector positions, we need to provide resources, like tuition assistance, in order for these jobs to compete with the salaries available to top-notch employees in the private sector," said Rep. Shays. "The Roosevelt Scholars program will create a new scholarship to fund graduate-level study in exchange for a federal service commitment in targeted, 'mission critical' occupational areas across the federal government. I can't think of a better investment the federal government can make than in training and invigorating its future leaders."

Any student attending an accredited institution as a full-time graduate student studying an approved concentration would be eligible for the program. Some of these "approved" concentrations include law, science, engineering and public health. Students going to school for their master's or doctoral degrees would be eligible as well.

Because of the federal government's hiring crisis, the bill would be a winner for the federal government who needs to fill critical jobs with younger, talented individuals. According to a recent study by the Partnership for Public Service, the federal government will need to fill 193,000 "mission critical" positions by 2009. According to the proposal for the Roosevelt Scholars program, the federal government is competing for an increasingly smaller pool of individuals that specialize in widely desired fields.

"In the face of a dwindling professional workforce, we must act now to recruit the scientists, engineers, and other high-level experts who make our government work," said Rep. Price. "Our initiative would mobilize the country's colleges and universities to address this very acute challenge."

The bill would also benefit graduate students, who, without scholarship assistance, would be facing tens of thousands of dollars in debt after graduation. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students going to school for master's degrees averaged a total of \$32,900 in debt after graduation. Students receiving higher-level degrees incurred anywhere from about \$41,000 for doctorates and MBA's to over \$125,000 for M.D. degrees, according to the center.

If passed, the bill would pay for an individual's educational needs up to \$60,000 a year.

For more information about the Roosevelt Scholars Legislation, visit ourpublicservice.org.