

Lt. Gov. Simon: Abolish political scholarships

Written by Kathryn Phillips
Monday, 27 February 2012 14:45

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SPRINGFIELD – February 22, 2012. Lt. Governor Sheila Simon today put her support behind a House bill that would abolish a legislative scholarship program that more than half of the state’s legislators are voluntarily abstaining from this year.

Simon backed House Bill 3810, sponsored by Rep. Fred Crespo, which passed out of the state government administrative committee 14-3 today. Earlier this month, the Better Government Association delivered an online petition with more than 600 signatures in support of the program’s abolishment to the Lt. Governor and state leaders.

Simon said: “While legislative scholarships help a small number of students, the program’s abuse comes at an incredibly high cost in terms of trust in government and absorbed tuition at colleges and universities. We would do better by our schools and students if we strengthened the need-based Monetary Award Program (MAP) grants that help thousands of Illinois students across the state fulfill their dreams of higher education. By eliminating the legislative scholarship program, Illinois can take a meaningful step toward improving our ethical standards, while focusing our efforts on making college more affordable for all students.”

Nearly 100 of the 177 members of the General Assembly have now opted out of giving legislative scholarships this year. HB3810 would end the political scholarship program June 1, 2012.

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