



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor signs legislation making college tuition-free**

*New Mexico's program the most expansive in the nation*

SILVER CITY, NM – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham on Friday signed Senate Bill 140, the New Mexico Opportunity Scholarship Act, making college tuition-free for most New Mexicans and establishing the most wide-reaching tuition-free scholarship program in the United States. The governor signed the legislation alongside college students in a ceremony at Western New Mexico University in Silver City, where more than 125 students have already benefited from the scholarship.

“For over a quarter of a century, New Mexico has been a national leader in providing free college to its residents. A fully funded Opportunity Scholarship opens the door for every New Mexican to reach higher, strengthening our economy, our families and our communities,” **Gov. Lujan Grisham** said. “Signing this legislation sends a clear message to New Mexicans that we believe in them and the contributions they will make for their families and the future of our great state.”

Senate Bill 140 was sponsored by Sen. Liz Stefanics and Rep. Joy Garratt.

New Mexico's Opportunity Scholarship, implemented by the Lujan Grisham administration in 2020, is the only state-funded scholarship program in the nation to include both recent high school graduates and returning adult learners; accommodate part-time students; include career training certificates, associate degrees and bachelor's degrees; and cover summer courses. In addition to covering full tuition and fees at in-state public colleges and universities, the scholarship lets students stack federal aid such as Pell Grants, local scholarships, and private scholarships so that they can use these funds to pay for books, materials, housing, food, transportation, childcare and other college costs.

“With the Opportunity Scholarship Act, New Mexico has made history and set a national example of how states can break down barriers for students everywhere,” Higher Education Department **Secretary Stephanie Rodriguez** said. “This would not have been possible without the leadership of Gov. Lujan Grisham, the advocacy of New Mexico students who propelled this legislation forward by sharing their experiences, and the work of our many other

partners at the state and national level who have helped us permanently change the game for every New Mexican who wants to pursue higher education.”

The General Appropriations Act directs \$75 million to the scholarship program, which could support up to 35,000 students beginning this fall, or over half of all undergraduate students in New Mexico. Over 10,000 Opportunity Scholarships have already been awarded to students over the past two years through prior appropriations.

“Today, we have taken a large step toward improving outcomes for all New Mexicans by investing in their potential and the potential of our entire state. Working hand in hand with Governor Lujan Grisham and Secretary Rodriguez, we are making transformative change possible for every family and community,” **Sen. Liz Stefanics** said.

“I am an adult learner who actually graduated from college by taking six credits per semester, so this bill is personally important to me. Working together with Governor Lujan Grisham, we have laid a strong foundation in early childhood education, K-12 education, and now, higher education. I am proud to have sponsored this legislation, and I know it will change the lives of thousands of New Mexicans,” **Rep. Joy Garratt** said.

New Mexico residents interested in receiving the scholarship are encouraged to enroll in a New Mexico public college or university this fall and complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). Students do not need to fill out any additional applications to receive the Opportunity Scholarship. More information is available at [www.freecollegenm.org](http://www.freecollegenm.org).

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