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1 **HOUSE BILL NO. 404**

2 Offered January 14, 2026

3 Prefiled January 12, 2026

4 *A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-615.1 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Enslaved Ancestors College*
5 *Access Scholarship and Memorial Program; parameters.*

6 Patron—Reid

7 Committee Referral Pending

8 **Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**9 **1. That § 23.1-615.1 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:**10 **§ 23.1-615.1. Enslaved or Displaced Ancestors College Access Scholarship and Memorial Program.**11 A. The *Enslaved or Displaced Ancestors College Access Scholarship and Memorial Program* (the
12 Program) is established for the purpose of reckoning with the history of the Commonwealth, addressing the
13 long legacy of slavery and *residential displacement* in the Commonwealth, and acknowledging that the
14 foundational success of several public institutions of higher education was based on the labor of enslaved
15 individuals *or, in the case of Christopher Newport University and Old Dominion University, the displacement*
16 *of residents of the Shoe Lane neighborhood in Newport News and residents of the Lambert's Point*
17 *neighborhood in Norfolk, respectively.*18 B. Consistent with the purpose set forth in subsection A, *Christopher Newport University, Longwood*
19 *University, Old Dominion University, the University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, the*
20 *Virginia Military Institute, and The College of William and Mary in Virginia shall each implement and*
21 *execute the Program, with any source of funds other than state funds or tuition or fee increases, by annually*
22 *(i) identifying and memorializing, to the extent possible, all enslaved individuals who labored on former and*
23 *current institutionally controlled grounds and property *or, in the case of Christopher Newport University and**
24 **Old Dominion University, all displaced residents of the Shoe Lane neighborhood in Newport News and all**
25 **displaced residents of the Lambert's Point neighborhood in Norfolk, respectively and (ii) providing a tangible**
26 **benefit such as that consists of (a) a college scholarship for individuals or specific communities with a**
27 **demonstrated historic connection to residential displacement that will empower families to be lifted out of the**
28 **cycle of poverty, in the case of Christopher Newport University and Old Dominion University, or (b) a**
29 **college scholarship or community-based economic development program for individuals or specific**
30 **communities with a demonstrated historic connection to slavery that will empower families to be lifted out of**
31 **the cycle of poverty, in the case of each other institution that is required to implement and execute the**
32 **Program. Each institution that is required to or chooses to provide a college scholarship program as such**
33 **tangible benefit shall fund such program from the institution's endowment funds or through fundraising or**
34 **philanthropic contributions and shall provide, on the basis of student merit and academic potential and other**
35 **institution-specific criteria but without consideration of any other financial aid to which the recipient may be**
36 **eligible, at least one scholarship to an undergraduate student in an amount equal to the full cost of tuition,**
37 **mandatory fees, and room and board. No institution shall pass the cost of any such scholarship program to**
38 **other enrolled students by increasing the rate of tuition or mandatory fees.**39 C. The Council shall *(i) collaborate with the institutions set forth in subsection B to establish guidelines*
40 *for the implementation of the Program, including guidelines for the identification of all enslaved individuals*
41 *who labored on former and current institutionally controlled grounds and property *or, in the case of**
42 **Christopher Newport University and Old Dominion University, all displaced residents of the Shoe Lane**
43 **neighborhood in Newport News and all displaced residents of the Lambert's Point neighborhood in Norfolk,**
44 **respectively, the development of appropriate means to memorialize these individuals, the development of**
45 **programs for individuals and communities still experiencing the legacy of slavery or residential displacement**
46 **to empower them to break the cycle of poverty, eligibility criteria for participation in such programs, and the**
47 **duration of such programs; (ii) establish a work group that consists of a representative of each institution set**
48 **forth in subsection B that meets at least semiannually to discuss Program administration, including sharing**
49 **best practices on administration and research, coordinating funding and fundraising strategies, developing**
50 **outreach and marketing plans, collaborating on historical and genealogical research efforts, and aligning**
51 **government and community engagement initiatives; and (iii) develop and maintain a single statewide online**
52 **portal that describes each institution's program, criteria, and investments in scholarship students or the**
53 **community, lists designated points of contact at each institution, shares application timelines and processes,**
54 **and offers historical context and ongoing memorial updates.**55 D. Each institution set forth in subsection B shall continue the activities set forth in subsection B pursuant
56 to the Program *(i)* for a period equal in length to the period during which the institution used enslaved

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59 individuals to support the institution *or, in the case of Christopher Newport University and Old Dominion*
60 *University, engaged in the displacement of residents of the Shoe Lane neighborhood in Newport News or of*
61 *residents of the Lambert's Point neighborhood in Norfolk, respectively* or (ii) until scholarships have been
62 awarded to a number of recipients equal to 100 percent of the population of enslaved individuals identified
63 pursuant to subsection B who labored on former and current institutionally controlled grounds and property
64 *or, in the case of Christopher Newport University and Old Dominion University, displaced residents of the*
65 *Shoe Lane neighborhood in Newport News or displaced residents of the Lambert's Point neighborhood in*
66 *Norfolk, respectively, who were identified pursuant to subsection B, whichever occurs first.*

67 E. Each institution set forth in subsection B shall annually submit to the Council information on the
68 implementation of the Program. The Council shall compile such information in a report and submit such
69 report no later than November 1 of each year to the ~~Chairmen~~ Chairs of the House Committee on
70 Appropriations, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, the
71 Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, ~~and~~ the Virginia African American Advisory Board, ~~and~~
72 *the Commission to Study the History of the Uprooting of Black Communities by Public Institutions of Higher*
73 *Education in the Commonwealth.*

74 F. Each private institution of higher education with a legacy of slavery *or residential displacement* that is
75 similar to that of any institution set forth in subsection B is strongly encouraged to participate in the Program
76 on a voluntary basis.