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Gov Guinn Millennium Scholarship Good Through Fiscal Year 2011
State Treasurer partners with Legislative leaders and Board of Regents to ensure funding available for popular program through coming school year

Carson City—State Treasurer Kate Marshall said she is pleased with today's decision by the Interim Finance Committee (IFC) to find funding solutions for the Gov. Guinn Millennium Scholarship program (GGMS) to ensure its financial viability through at least Fiscal Year 2011. At a meeting in Las Vegas this morning, IFC members voted unanimously to transfer around \$4.2 million from the state's College Savings Plans program to the GGMS. The money being transferred is funding provided to the Treasurer's Office from College Savings Plans program managers.

At an earlier IFC meeting, committee members asked the Treasurer's Office about how the transfer might impact the College Savings Plans and the Nevada Prepaid Tuition programs. Committee members were informed the transfer would not affect the Nevada Prepaid Tuition program's current funded status of approximately 100%, nor would the transfer adversely affect individual Nevada College Savings Plans account holders.

As the administrator of the GGMS, College Savings Plans, and Nevada Prepaid Tuition programs, Marshall has been a strong and vocal advocate of exploring funding solutions that would keep the GGMS program available for graduating high school seniors and present millennium scholars.

Marshall said today's decision by the Legislature provides adequate funding to pay bills associated with the GGMS through FY11 while at the same time not harming the Nevada Prepaid Tuition nor the College Savings Plans programs. "The goal of Legislative leadership, the Board of Regents, and my office has been to find a temporary funding solution to get the Millennium Scholarship program financially solvent through Fiscal Year 2011, which would then provide the full Legislature with the ability to thoughtfully review the long-term merits of continuing the program past this coming school year. Today's action is a direct result of people coming together to find a common solution that directly benefits students and our higher education system."

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As is the customary practice, the Treasurer's Office will soon be sending out packets of information concerning the scholarship, including the Acknowledgement of Award, after receiving the certified list of eligible high school seniors from the Board of Regents, per Nevada Revised Statutes. The Treasurer's Office role is to serve as the administrator of the GGMS: to pay bills with money provided by the State Legislature to eligible institutions that millennium scholars choose to attend, including Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) institutions, Sierra Nevada College, and the University of Southern Nevada. Student eligibility criteria are established by the State Legislature and certification of a student's eligibility is verified by the Nevada Board of Regents.

A funding gap of approximately \$4.2 million for FY11 existed following lower than anticipated funding from Nevada's share of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement (which was not known until the state received its payment in mid April) and a total of \$32.8 million in available funds being removed from the GGMS Trust Fund by the State Legislature for other purposes.

Marshall added that it is important to realize that today's decision by the IFC to transfer these funds will not adversely affect Nevada Prepaid Tuition contracts. "Per state law, payments made by contract holders must be held in a separate account (Higher Education Trust Fund) and deposits into these individual accounts are not state revenue and cannot be used to pay for any expenses other than tuition payments." The Nevada Prepaid Higher Education Trust Fund is currently funded at approximately 100 percent.

For more information about the Gov. Guinn Millennium Scholarship program, visit the Nevada State Treasurer's Office website, www.nevadatreasurer.gov.

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