

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

## HOUSE BILL

No. 2338 Session of  
2015

INTRODUCED BY GABLER, BENNINGHOFF, SAYLOR, SANKEY, BOBACK,  
CAUSER, COOK-ARTIS, CUTLER, DAY, DRISCOLL, DUSH, ELLIS, FEE,  
GILLESPIE, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GROVE, HARHART, HARPER, HELM,  
PHILLIPS-HILL, KNOWLES, LONGIETTI, MAJOR, MCGINNIS, MENTZER,  
B. MILLER, MILNE, NESBIT, O'NEILL, OBERLANDER, RAPP, REGAN,  
SCHEMEL, SCHLOSSBERG, SIMMONS, SNYDER, STURLA, TAYLOR,  
TOBASH, TOPPER, TURZAI, WARD, WENTLING, ZIMMERMAN, KLUNK,  
JOZWIAK, MAHONEY, GINGRICH, ROEBUCK, ORTITAY, PETRI, CONKLIN  
AND BARBIN, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

## AN ACT

1 Providing for student protection during the transition of a  
2 postsecondary education institution to new accreditation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Student  
7 Protection Act.

8 Section 2. Student protections.

9 (a) General rule.--If the United States Department of  
10 Education discontinues its recognition of a national accrediting  
11 agency, the Commonwealth shall take all actions necessary to  
12 ensure the following with respect to each student who attends  
13 any of the Pennsylvania postsecondary education institutions  
14 that are currently accredited by the national accrediting agency

1 that loses Federal recognition:

2 (1) Such student will remain eligible for all State  
3 financial assistance through the Pennsylvania Higher  
4 Education Assistance Agency and any other State agency  
5 through which such student may be eligible for assistance,  
6 provided the student meets all other qualifications for the  
7 financial assistance. WHEN ADVANCING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE <--  
8 FUNDS DURING A SCHOOL'S TRANSITION TO NEW ACCREDITATION, THE  
9 PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY MAY FOLLOW  
10 THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ISSUANCE OF  
11 FEDERAL TITLE IV FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, ALONG WITH ANY OTHER  
12 TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLIED DURING THIS TRANSITION.

13 (2) Such student will remain eligible for State  
14 licensure, certification or any other professional credential  
15 for which the student has trained, provided the student meets  
16 all other qualifications and passes any exams or assessments  
17 necessary for such licensure, certification or credential.

18 (b) Transition of institutions to new accreditors.--The  
19 Pennsylvania postsecondary education institutions that are  
20 accredited by the national accrediting agency that loses Federal  
21 recognition shall be provided a transition period of no less  
22 than 18 months to receive new accreditation by another  
23 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of  
24 Education. The student protections provided in subsection (a)  
25 shall remain in effect for students attending these institutions  
26 throughout this transition period. If a Pennsylvania  
27 postsecondary education institution has not received new  
28 accreditation by the end of this 18-month transition period, the  
29 agencies of the Commonwealth may continue the student  
30 protections provided in subsection (a) until new accreditation

1 is received if the agency deems the extension of the protections  
2 to be in the best interest of the students attending the  
3 institution.

4 (C) STUDENT DISCLOSURES.--DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO <--  
5 NEW ACCREDITATION, THE INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE A DISCLOSURE TO  
6 THE RECIPIENTS OF ANY STATE AID PROVIDED FOR IN SUBSECTION (A)  
7 (1). THIS DISCLOSURE SHALL PROVIDE THE STATUS OF THE  
8 INSTITUTION'S APPLICATION FOR NEW ACCREDITATION. IT MAY ALSO  
9 CONTAIN OTHER INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS.

10 SECTION 3. NOTICE.

11 THE PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY SHALL  
12 PUBLISH GUIDANCE ON ITS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE FOR  
13 IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.

14 Section ~~3~~ 4. Expiration. <--

15 This act shall expire December 31, 2018.

16 Section ~~4~~ 5. Effective date. <--

17 This act shall take effect immediately.