

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 2450 Session of 2012

INTRODUCED BY ROAE AND MOUL, JUNE 6, 2012

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, JUNE 6, 2012

AN ACT

1 Providing for payment to certain students at State system
2 universities; establishing the Responsible Students First
3 Grant Fund; providing for the powers and duties of the
4 Department of Education and the Secretary of Education;
5 establishing the Job-ready Major Evaluation Advisory
6 Committee; and providing for the powers and duties of the
7 committee.

8 The General Assembly finds and declares that:

9 (1) Responsible students at institutions of higher
10 education pursue a course of study and select an academic
11 major that is likely to lead to gainful employment
12 opportunities.

13 (2) While many students at the institutions of the State
14 System of Higher Education select academic majors that are
15 likely to lead to gainful employment, other students do not
16 choose academic majors that are likely to do so.

17 (3) Many job vacancies in this Commonwealth are a result
18 of employers not being able to find job applicants with the
19 required educational background for the available jobs.

20 (4) Students would be better served by completing higher
21 education degrees in academic majors that provide a

1 reasonable chance of getting a job that utilizes their major.

2 (5) Students at institutions of the State System of
3 Higher Education would more carefully select their academic
4 majors if additional funding was provided for students who
5 select job-ready majors at the institutions they attend.

6 (6) Institutions of the State System of Higher Education
7 would better serve the residents of this Commonwealth if all
8 of their students, rather than just some of them, completed
9 courses of study that are likely to lead to gainful
10 employment.

11 (7) Scarce tax money appropriated to the State System of
12 Higher Education would be better utilized if it was
13 redirected to public school districts for early education
14 programs rather than to postsecondary education courses of
15 study that are likely to result in a graduate's being unable
16 to get a job after earning a degree that does not make the
17 person job-ready.

18 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
19 hereby enacts as follows:

20 Section 1. Short title.

21 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Responsible
22 Students First Act.

23 Section 2. Definitions.

24 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
25 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
26 context clearly indicates otherwise:

27 "Committee." The Job-ready Major Evaluation Advisory
28 Committee established by this act.

29 "Department." The Department of Education of the
30 Commonwealth.

1 "Fund." The Responsible Students First Grant Fund

2 established by this act.

3 "Job-ready major." A major course of study at a State system
4 university that the Job-ready Major Evaluation Advisory
5 Committee finds likely to lead to gainful employment in this
6 Commonwealth.

7 "Other matriculating student." A resident of this
8 Commonwealth who has matriculated at a State system university
9 and who has not declared a job-ready major.

10 "Responsible student." A resident of this Commonwealth who
11 has matriculated at a State system university and has declared a
12 job-ready major.

13 "Secretary." The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth.

14 "State system university." A university of the State System
15 of Higher Education.

16 Section 3. Responsible Students First Grant Fund.

17 (a) Establishment.--The Responsible Students First Grant
18 Fund is established as a restricted account in the State
19 Treasury. The moneys of the fund are appropriated to the
20 department on a continuing basis for the purpose of awarding
21 grants to responsible students and making payments to school
22 districts as provided in this act.

23 (b) Accounts.--An account for each State system university
24 is established in the fund.

25 Section 4. Distribution of funding.

26 (a) Annual transfer.--For each fiscal year, the
27 appropriation made to the State System of Higher Education shall
28 be transferred from the General Fund to the Responsible Students
29 First Grant Fund.

30 (b) Allocations.--After the transfer occurs under subsection

(a), the secretary shall allocate the funding to each State system university according to the same formula used in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2011, and shall transfer the amount of the allocation to the corresponding accounts for each State system university.

(c) Payment to students.--

(1) After making the allocation to an account for a State system university under subsection (b), the secretary shall distribute the money in the account to the State system university, on behalf of its students, as follows:

(i) Thirty-three percent of the money shall be distributed on a pro rata basis for responsible students.

(ii) Sixty-seven percent of the money shall be distributed on a pro rata basis for responsible students and other matriculating students.

(2) A State system university that receives the distribution for a student under paragraph (1) shall apply the total amount of the payment to the academic department in which the student has declared a major.

Section 5. Determination of number of responsible students.

The department shall determine the number of responsible students at each State system university not more than 30 days prior to the beginning of the fall semester.

Section 6. Job-ready Major Evaluation Advisory Committee.

(a) Establishment.--The Job-ready Major Evaluation Advisory Committee is established in the department. The committee shall consist of the following members:

(1) The secretary.

(2) The Secretary of Labor and Industry.

(3) The Secretary of Community and Economic Development.

1 (4) A representative of a Statewide small business group
2 who is appointed by the Governor.

3 (5) A representative of a Statewide business group that
4 has a membership of small, medium and large businesses and
5 who is appointed by the Governor.

6 (6) A representative of a Statewide manufacturers group
7 who is appointed by the Governor.

8 (7) A representative of a Statewide agriculture group
9 who is appointed by the Governor.

10 (8) A representative of a Statewide union who is
11 appointed by the Governor.

12 (9) A representative of a government watchdog group,
13 which advocates for fiscal responsibility, who is appointed
14 by the Governor.

15 (b) Powers and duties.--The committee shall:

16 (1) Annually review the list of academic majors offered
17 by the State system universities, evaluate those academic
18 majors that are likely to lead to gainful employment in this
19 Commonwealth and place those academic majors on a job-ready
20 major list. In performing its duties under this paragraph,
21 the committee shall consider actual job openings, projected
22 job openings, the needs of employers, transferability of
23 skills and any other information deemed relevant by the
24 committee.

25 (2) Prepare a report of its job-ready major list and
26 submit it to the secretary.

27 (c) Secretary review.--The secretary shall review the report
28 received from the committee under subsection (b) (2) and utilize
29 the report as the basis of the regulations required by section
30 7.

1 Section 7. Duty of secretary.

2 The secretary shall promulgate regulations necessary to
3 determine which academic majors offered at State system
4 universities are job-ready majors.

5 Section 8. Cooperation.

6 The State system universities shall cooperate with the
7 department in the administration of this act.

8 Section 9. Effective date.

9 This act shall take effect in 60 days.