WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

2016 REGULAR SESSION

Introduced

Senate Bill 653

BY SENATOR KARNES

[Introduced February 20, 2016;

Referred to the Committee on Education; and then to the

Committee on Finance.]

1   A BILL to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding thereto two new

2   sections, designated §18B-14-3 and §18B-14-4, all relating to increasing higher education

3   student success; requiring that course catalogs include certain information relating to

4   employment, compensation, in-state employment and student success rate; providing

5   exception to requirement; requiring the Higher Education Policy Commission and Council

6   for Community and Technical College Education to implement rules; creating a voluntary

7   college completion incentive program whereby an institution of higher education accepts

8   less state funding in return for certain incentive bonuses relating to student graduation and

9   employment of graduates; and creating a tax credit for West Virginia resident students

10   successfully completing certain courses of study.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of West Virginia:

1   That the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, be amended by adding thereto two

2   new sections, designated §18B-14-3 and §18B-14-4, all to read as follows:

ARTICLE 14. MISCELLANEOUS.

§18B-14-3. The Informed Student Act.

1   (a) Beginning with the 2016-2017 school year, except as otherwise provided in subsection

2   (b) of this section, each state institution of higher education shall include in printed and online

3   course catalogs, in the description for each major or area of study, the following information for

4   that particular major or area of study:

5   (1) A five-year trailing average employment statistic showing the percent of students

6   employed in the field studied within twelve months of graduation. Undergraduate students

7   continuing on to postgraduate programs within six months shall be considered employed;

8   (2) The average introductory compensation for that field of study;

9   (3) The percentage of graduates employed in West Virginia in that field of study within

10 twelve months; and

11   (4) The average success rate for students in that particular field. Students changing

12   majors shall be counted in their new field of study.

13   (b) Any course catalogs that have been printed prior to the effective date of this section

14   are not required to be reprinted. This exception does not apply to any course catalogs in

15   electronic format.

16   (c) The Policy Commission and Council shall each propose a legislative rule for legislative

17   approval pursuant to article three-a, chapter twenty-nine-a of this code to implement the

18   provisions of this section. The Legislature finds that an emergency exists and, therefore, the

19   Policy Commission and Council also shall propose an emergency rule pursuant to article three-

20   a, chapter twenty-nine-a to implement the provisions of this section. At a minimum, both the

21   legislative rule and the emergency rule shall set forth the sources of data and methodologies used

22   to determine the information required by this section.

§18B-14-4. An act to improve student success rates at state institutions of higher education.

1   (a) The Legislature finds that:

2   (1) The State of West Virginia invests an enormous amount of precious resources into our

3   higher education system;

4   (2) The number of students who begin a course of study at our institutions of higher

5   education who later fail to successfully complete a program is unacceptably high; and

6   (3) The low success rates for our institutions results in wasted resources and squandered

7   opportunities for our children.

8   (b) In order to encourage and reward our highest performing institutions, a voluntary

9   college completion incentive program is hereby established. Institutions of higher education that

10   choose to participate in the program shall receive $100 less per year per student in state funding.

11   However, the following performance incentives shall be available to state institutions of higher

12   education that choose to participate:

13   (1) For each West Virginia resident student completing a two-year degree and finding full-

14   time employment within twelve months in the State of West Virginia, in their area of study, the

15   institution awarding the degree shall be entitled to an incentive bonus of $500;

16   (2) For each West Virginia resident student completing a four-year degree and finding full-

17   time employment within twelve months in the State of West Virginia, in their area of study, the

18   institution awarding the degree shall be entitled to an incentive bonus of $1,000;

19   (3) For each West Virginia resident student completing a post-graduate, master or doctoral

20   degree and finding full-time employment within twelve months in the State of West Virginia, in

21   their area of study, the institution awarding the degree shall be entitled to an incentive bonus of

22    $1,000.

23   (c) To encourage and reward our students, West Virginia resident students successfully

24   completing a course of study that results in a two-year, four-year or post-graduate degree, who

25   continue to reside in West Virginia, are entitled to claim a nonrefundable, nontransferable tax

26   credit of $2,000. This tax credit may be carried forward for a period not to exceed ten years.

27   Students may receive only one credit each for a two-year degree, a four-year degree or a post-

28   graduate degree with a cumulative lifetime cap of $6,000.

NOTE: The purpose of this bill is to require that higher education course catalogs include certain information relating to employment rate, compensation, etc. to help students decide on an area of study; to create a voluntary college completion incentive program whereby an institution of higher education accepts less state funding in return for certain incentive bonuses relating to student graduation and employment of graduates; and to create a tax credit for West Virginia resident students successfully completing certain courses of study.

Strike-throughs indicate language that would be stricken from a heading or the present law and underscoring indicates new language that would be added.