



STATE OF DELAWARE
STATE COUNCIL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES
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The Honorable John Carney
Governor

John McNeal
SCPD Director

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 14, 2021

TO: All Members of the Delaware State Senate
and House of Representatives

FROM: Terri Hancharick – Chairperson *TH*
State Council for Persons with Disabilities

RE: S.B. 12 (SEEDS Program)

The State Council for Persons with Disabilities (SCPD) has reviewed S.B. 12, which proposes to amend Title 14 of the Delaware Code relating to Academic Progression, Duration of Eligibility, Adult Students, and Workforce Development Programs under The Delaware Student Excellence Equal Degree Act. The intent of the bill - the expansion of the SEED grant program - will encourage adult learners to return to school to enhance their knowledge and skills and increase their job opportunities. Adult individuals with a high school diploma or less education were significantly impacted by COVID-19-related job loss.¹ SCPD endorses the proposed legislation has the following observations.

Due in large measure to the COVID-19 pandemic, about 125,000 Delawareans filed for unemployment benefits and are facing an uncertain future for

¹§ 3401A.

themselves and their families. Many of these jobs will be gone forever. The purpose of this act is to jump-start Delaware's economy by opening The Delaware Student Excellence Equals Degree Act (SEED) to adult Delaware residents, who are not recent high school graduates, and to include short-term workforce development programs that put Delawareans to work in high demand fields where jobs presently exist. Currently, about 56% of Delawareans aged 25-64 lack a post-secondary degree. This legislation can help to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on those adults. Tennessee has instituted a similar program called the Tennessee Reconnect Act.

The proposed legislation added, "qualified, college-bound state resident students are relieved of the burden of paying undergraduate tuition at Delaware Technical and Community College, or the University of Delaware, Associate in Arts Program provided that these students meet the criteria set forth in this subchapter and are enrolled in a credit or non-credit program leading to the award of a recognized academic credential or pursuing studies leading to an associate degree at Delaware Technical and Community College."

Students who qualify shall not have to repay the State because it is the intent and purpose of the General Assembly, to help ensure that Delaware students stay in high school, excel academically, and have better access to higher education regardless of a family's financial circumstances and therefore payments under this program shall be grants, not loans.

The proposed legislation added "Recognized academic credential" which shall mean a diploma or certificate of completion for credit or non-credit training program consisting of 100 hours of instruction or more, or that requires a student to pass a licensure or certification examination approved by a federal, state or local government, regulatory body, or industry/trade group. Also, students who enroll in an associate's degree program as the holder of a Delaware State Board of Education Endorsement Secondary Credential shall have earned a cumulative score on the GED examination that is equivalent to a 2.5 G.P.A. on a 4.0 scale based on the standard formula for converting GED to GPA.

Thank you for your consideration and please contact SCPD if you have any questions or comments regarding our position and observations on the proposed legislation.

cc: Ms. Laura Waterland, Esq.
Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens
Developmental Disabilities Council

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