

ASSEMBLY, No. 3140

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 213th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED SEPTEMBER 22, 2008

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROLINE CASAGRANDE

District 12 (Mercer and Monmouth)

Assemblyman DECLAN J. O'SCANLON, JR.

District 12 (Mercer and Monmouth)

SYNOPSIS

Prohibits public employers from reimbursing tuition or awarding promotions or compensation based on degrees or certifications obtained from unaccredited institutions.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT prohibiting public employers from reimbursing tuition or
2 awarding promotions or compensation based on degrees or
3 certifications obtained from unaccredited institutions and
4 supplementing various parts of the statutory law.

5
6 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
7 of New Jersey:

8
9 1. At no time shall a board of education reimburse tuition costs
10 or fees to an officer or employee attending an institution that is not
11 a duly authorized institution of higher education or award
12 promotions or additional compensation based on a degree or
13 certification obtained from an institution that is not a duly
14 authorized institution of higher education.

15 For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of
16 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the
17 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution
18 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited
19 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body
20 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the
21 United States Department of Education.

22 Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its
23 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means
24 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular
25 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding
26 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United
27 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States
28 Department of Education.

29 An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts
30 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation
31 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject
32 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall
33 provide.

34
35 2. At no time shall a county or municipality or any board,
36 commission, authority, or instrumentality thereof, reimburse tuition
37 costs or fees to an officer or employee attending an institution that
38 is not a duly authorized institution of higher education or award
39 promotions or additional compensation based on a degree or
40 certification obtained from an institution that is not a duly
41 authorized institution of higher education.

42 For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of
43 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the
44 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution
45 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited
46 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body
47 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the
48 United States Department of Education.

1 Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its
2 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means
3 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular
4 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding
5 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United
6 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States
7 Department of Education.

8 An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts
9 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation
10 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject
11 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall
12 provide

13
14 3. At no time shall the State or any board, commission, authority
15 or instrumentality thereof, including an institution of higher
16 education, reimburse tuition costs or fees to an officer or employee
17 attending an institution that is not a duly authorized institution of
18 higher education or award promotions or additional compensation
19 based on a degree or certification obtained from an institution that
20 is not a duly authorized institution of higher education.

21 For the purposes of this section, duly authorized institution of
22 higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the
23 Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution
24 licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited
25 or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body
26 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the
27 United States Department of Education.

28 Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its
29 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means
30 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular
31 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding
32 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United
33 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States
34 Department of Education.

35 An officer or employee who knowingly and willfully accepts
36 prohibited reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation
37 shall be guilty of a disorderly persons offense and shall be subject
38 to such disciplinary process or reimbursement as the employer shall
39 provide.

40
41 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

42
43
44 STATEMENT

45
46 This bill prohibits public employers from reimbursing tuition
47 costs or fees or awarding promotions or compensation based on
48 degrees or certifications obtained from an institution that is not a

1 duly authorized institution of higher education. A duly authorized
2 institution of higher education means an in-State institution licensed
3 by the Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State
4 institution licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally
5 accredited or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting
6 body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the
7 United States Department of Education.

8 Regarding institutions located outside of the United States or its
9 possessions, a duly authorized institution of higher education means
10 one that is recognized by the appropriate body in the particular
11 country provided that the institution's requirements for awarding
12 degrees are generally equivalent to those accepted in the United
13 States by an accrediting body recognized by the United States
14 Department of Education.

15 This bill also makes it a disorderly persons offense for an officer
16 or employee to knowingly and willfully accept prohibited
17 reimbursement, promotion or additional compensation. The officer
18 or employee will also be subject to such disciplinary process or
19 reimbursement as the employer shall provide. A disorderly persons
20 offense is punishable by up to six months in prison or a \$1,000 fine.

21 This bill is in response to recent news reports that some school
22 districts have provided tuition assistance for coursework taken, and
23 provided additional compensation upon the attainment of a degree
24 completed, at an out-of-state institution of higher education that is
25 not considered by the State of New Jersey to be a duly authorized
26 institution.