

ASSEMBLY, No. 1931

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

215th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2012 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Assemblywoman CAROLINE CASAGRANDE

District 11 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman DECLAN J. O'SCANLON, JR.

District 13 (Monmouth)

Assemblyman ALBERT COUTINHO

District 29 (Essex)

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

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 3/6/2012)

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:*

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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.

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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

1 recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the
2 United States Department of Education.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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44 4. This act shall take effect immediately.

STATEMENT

This bill prohibits public employers from reimbursing tuition costs or fees or awarding promotions or compensation based on degrees or certifications obtained from an institution that is not a duly authorized institution of higher education. A duly authorized institution of higher education means an in-State institution licensed by the Commission on Higher Education or an out-of-State institution licensed by the appropriate state agency and regionally accredited or seeking accreditation by the appropriate accrediting body recognized by the Council on Postsecondary Education or the United States Department of Education.

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

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

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