ASSEMBLY CONCURRENT RESOLUTION No. 114

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
217th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED JANUARY 27, 2016

Sponsored by:
Assemblyman TROY SINGLETON
District 7 (Burlington)
Assemblyman JAMEL C. HOLLEY
District 20 (Union)
Assemblywoman ANNETTE QUIJANO
District 20 (Union)
Assemblywoman GABRIELA M. MOSQUERA
District 4 (Camden and Gloucester)

Co-Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman McKnight

SYNOPSIS
Encourages four-year public and independent institutions of higher education to offer baccalaureate degree programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT
As introduced.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 4/5/2016)
A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION encouraging four-year institutions of higher education to offer baccalaureate degree programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees.

WHEREAS, The cost of attending an institution of higher education continues to increase, and many New Jersey students and their families find it difficult to afford the tuition and fees required for enrollment; and

WHEREAS, College tuition has increased at a rate faster than inflation for approximately 30 years, which has resulted in record-high student loan debt. At approximately $1.2 trillion, total student loan debt has exceeded the total national credit card debt; and

WHEREAS, In its ninth annual report on student loan debt issued in November of 2014, the Institute for College Access and Success found that nearly seven in 10 college seniors who graduated in 2013 left school with an average of $28,400 in student loan debt, an increase of two percent over 2012; and

WHEREAS, According to the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, for the 2014-2015 academic year, the average annual cost of tuition and fees for a full-time, in-State, undergraduate student enrolled in a four-year public institution of higher education is $12,894, and the average annual cost of tuition and fees for a full-time undergraduate student enrolled in an independent institution of higher education in New Jersey is $35,084; and

WHEREAS, A person’s level of education continues to be one of the most significant factors in determining his economic well-being. According to a 2011 United States Census Bureau report, a person who graduates from college with a baccalaureate degree will earn, over the course of a lifetime, $2.4 million, which, on average, is $1 million more than a person with only a high school diploma; and

WHEREAS, Some states have taken measures to make college more affordable. In 2011, then-Texas Governor Rick Perry challenged public colleges to design four-year baccalaureate degree programs costing no more than $10,000 in tuition, fees, and books, and to achieve the necessary cost reductions by teaching students on-line and awarding degrees based on competency; and

WHEREAS, Texas A&M-San Antonio became the first institution of higher education in Texas to answer the Governor’s challenge by offering a baccalaureate degree in information technology that cost students under $10,000. To date, 11 other Texas colleges have $10,000 degree initiatives; and

WHEREAS, Texas is not alone in this endeavor. In Florida, 12 colleges have either developed proposals to offer $10,000 baccalaureate degree programs or are in the process of doing so, and Oklahoma and Oregon are considering similar $10,000 degree proposals; and

WHEREAS, With many highly-skilled workers competing for a limited number of job openings, it is imperative that high school graduates be able to afford to attend college and attain the skills necessary to
compete in the 21st century workplace. Offering baccalaureate
degree programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees
will greatly increase the ability of New Jersey students to attend an
institution of higher education, acquire the training needed to secure
good, high-paying jobs, minimize student loan debt, and become
productive members of their communities; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the General Assembly of the State of New
Jersey (the Senate concurring):

1. The Legislature encourages four-year public and
independent institutions of higher education to offer baccalaureate
degree programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees.
The availability of these degree programs will greatly increase the
ability of New Jersey students to attend an institution of higher
education and acquire the training needed to secure high-paying
jobs, and will significantly reduce the amount of burdensome
student loan debt.

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State,
shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly or the
Secretary of the Senate to the Secretary of Higher Education and to
the president and the members of the governing board of each four-
year public and independent institution of higher education in the
State.

STATEMENT

This concurrent resolution encourages four-year public and
independent institutions of higher education to offer baccalaureate
degree programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees.
The cost of attending an institution of higher education continues to
increase, and many New Jersey students and their families find it
difficult to afford the tuition and fees required for enrollment.
A person’s level of education continues to be one of the most
significant factors in determining his economic well-being.
According to a 2011 United States Census Bureau report, a person
who graduates from college with a baccalaureate degree will earn,
over the course of a lifetime, $2.4 million, which, on average, is $1
million more than a person with only a high school diploma. With
many highly-skilled workers competing for a limited number of job
openings, it is imperative that high school graduates be able to
afford to attend college and attain the skills necessary to compete in
the 21st century workplace. Offering baccalaureate degree
programs that cost no more than $10,000 in tuition and fees will
greatly increase the ability of New Jersey students to attend an
institution of higher education and acquire the training needed to
secure high-paying jobs, and will significantly reduce their student loan debt. A number of institutions of higher education in other states, including Texas and Florida, have already taken measures to make attending college more affordable by developing $10,000 baccalaureate degree programs.