

# SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

### **SENATE, No. 775**

with committee amendments

# **STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

DATED: MARCH 7, 2019

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 775 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill establishes a Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission, which will examine the operation of the State's Tuition Aid Grant Program and develop recommendations for improvements to the program. The commission will include the following 10 members: the Executive Director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority; five members appointed by the Governor, including a representative of the State colleges and universities, a representative of the public research universities, a representative of the county colleges, a representative of the independent colleges and universities, and a representative of the proprietary schools which have been authorized to offer licensed degree programs; two public members appointed by the President of the Senate; and two public members appointed by the Speaker of the General Assembly.

Under the bill, the Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission is tasked with examining and evaluating the Tuition Aid Grant Program, identifying any barriers, gaps, or deficiencies in the successful operation of the program, and developing recommendations for program improvements. In particular, the commission will study and consider the following issues: (a) tuition aid grant amounts currently awarded to eligible students; (b) the percentage of tuition costs covered by tuition aid grants; (c) adjustments in the level of tuition aid grant awards from one fiscal year to the next, including the different formulas or methods used over different fiscal years to calculate the amount of a tuition aid grant; (d) the methodology used to calculate the New Jersey Eligibility Index; (e) the characteristics of students whose eligibility for a tuition aid grant differs from their eligibility for federal need-based aid, as calculated by the New Jersey Eligibility Index and the federal methodology for the Expected Family Contribution, respectively; (f) the graduation rates of tuition aid grant recipients; (g) the history of State appropriations made to support the Tuition Aid Grant Program; and (h) the sufficiency of the tuition aid grants

awarded to eligible students in light of the original intent of the statute establishing the Tuition Aid Grant Program.

The bill directs the Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission to issue a report of its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Legislature no later than 12 months after the commission organizes.

The committee amended the bill to add to the Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission a representative of the proprietary schools which have been authorized to offer licensed degree programs. The committee also amended the bill to require that the Tuition Aid Grant Study Commission is to study and consider the characteristics of students whose eligibility for a tuition aid grant differs from their eligibility for federal need-based aid, as calculated by the New Jersey Eligibility Index and the federal methodology for the Expected Family Contribution, respectively.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2018-2019 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.