

SENATE, No. 2356

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 9, 2020

Sponsored by:

Senator SANDRA B. CUNNINGHAM

District 31 (Hudson)

Senator THOMAS H. KEAN, JR.

District 21 (Morris, Somerset and Union)

Assemblywoman MILA M. JASEY

District 27 (Essex and Morris)

Assemblyman RALPH R. CAPUTO

District 28 (Essex)

Assemblywoman AURA K. DUNN

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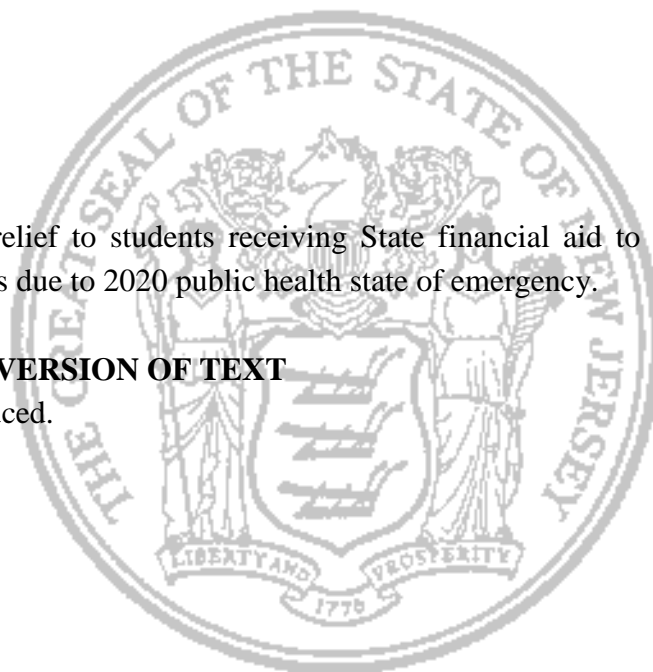
Senators Turner, Brown, Cardinale, Pennacchio, Singer, Sacco, Assemblywoman Vainieri Huttle, Assemblyman Moen, Assemblywoman Jimenez, Assemblyman Kennedy, Assemblywoman Murphy, Assemblymen Zwicker, Johnson, Benson, Assemblywomen McKnight, Speight, Assemblymen Spearman, Chiaravalloti, Assemblywoman Tucker, Assemblyman DeAngelo and Assemblywoman Quijano

SYNOPSIS

Provides relief to students receiving State financial aid to address special circumstances due to 2020 public health state of emergency.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 5/14/2020)

1 AN ACT concerning student financial aid and the 2020 public health
2 state of emergency and supplementing various parts of the
3 statutory law.

4
5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:

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8 1. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
9 exclude the spring 2020 semester from a student's total lifetime
10 eligibility limits for all State financial aid programs administered
11 pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-1 et seq., if the student was unable to
12 complete the semester due to the public health state of emergency
13 declared to exist in New Jersey by Executive Order 103 dated
14 March 9, 2020.

15
16 2. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
17 waive the amounts that a student is required to return under
18 N.J.S.18A:71B-5, if the institution has already disbursed the
19 student's State financial aid and the student withdraws or reduces
20 his credits to below full-time, or in the case of a part-time State
21 tuition aid grant reduces his credits to below half-time, due to the
22 public health state of emergency declared to exist in New Jersey by
23 Executive Order 103 dated March 9, 2020.

24
25 3. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
26 student enrolled in a county college in the 2019-2020 academic year
27 shall remain eligible for a scholarship under the NJ STARS
28 Program in the third semester of county college enrollment. To
29 remain eligible for the scholarship in the fourth and fifth semesters
30 of county college enrollment, a student who was enrolled in the
31 2019-2020 academic year shall attain a grade point average of at
32 least 3.0 by the start of the student's fourth semester of county
33 college enrollment.

34
35 4. a. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
36 student enrolled in a county college in the 2019-2020 academic year
37 shall attain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 upon
38 graduation from the county college to be eligible for a scholarship
39 under the NJ STARS II Program for the student's third academic
40 year of study.

41 b. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
42 student enrolled in a four-year institution of higher education in the
43 2019-2020 academic year shall remain eligible for a scholarship
44 under the NJ STARS II Program in his third semester of study at a
45 four-year institution. To remain eligible for a scholarship in the
46 fourth semester of study, a student who was enrolled in the 2019-
47 2020 academic year shall attain a grade point average of at least a

1 3.25 based on the student's performance during the first three
2 semesters of study at the four-year institution.

3

4 5. This act shall take effect immediately.

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STATEMENT

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9 This bill addresses certain issues related to State financial aid
10 programs that have arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill
11 provides that the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority
12 will exclude the spring 2020 semester from a student's total lifetime
13 eligibility limits for all State financial aid programs, if the student
14 was unable to complete the semester due to the public health state
15 of emergency declared by Governor Murphy through Executive
16 Order 103. The bill also provides that if a student withdraws or
17 reduces his credits to below full-time, or in the case of a part-time
18 State tuition aid grant (TAG) reduces his credits below half-time,
19 due to the public health state of emergency and the institution has
20 already disbursed the student's State financial aid, the authority will
21 waive the State financial aid amounts that a student would be
22 required to return under existing law.

23 The bill also makes changes to the New Jersey Student Tuition
24 Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program and the New
25 Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship II (NJ
26 STARS II) Program. The bill provides that a student enrolled in a
27 county college in the 2019-2020 academic year will remain eligible
28 for the NJ STARS scholarship in the third semester of county
29 college enrollment. In order to remain eligible for the scholarship in
30 the fourth and fifth semesters of county college enrollment, a
31 student who was enrolled in the 2019-2020 academic year must
32 attain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 by the start of the
33 student's fourth semester of county college enrollment. Under
34 current law, after the first year of enrollment at the county college,
35 the student continues to be eligible for the NJ STARS scholarship if
36 he attains a GPA of at least 3.0 by the start of the student's second
37 year of county college enrollment.

38 The bill provides that a student enrolled in a county college in
39 the 2019-2020 academic year must attain a cumulative GPA of at
40 least 3.0 upon graduation from the county college to be eligible for
41 an NJ STARS II scholarship for the student's third academic year of
42 study. Current law requires a student to attain a cumulative GPA of
43 at least 3.25 upon graduation from the county college to receive the
44 NJ STARS II scholarship for his third academic year of study.

45 In addition, the bill provides that a student enrolled in a four-
46 year institution of higher education in the 2019-2020 academic year
47 will remain eligible for the NJ STARS II scholarship in his third
48 semester of study at the four-year institution. In order to remain

1 eligible for a scholarship in the fourth semester of study, a student
2 who was enrolled in the 2019-2020 academic year must attain a
3 grade point average of at least a 3.25 based on the student's
4 performance during the first three semesters of study at the four-
5 year institution. Current law provides that a student will be eligible
6 to receive an NJSTARS II scholarship for his fourth academic year
7 of study if, based on his performance during the third academic year
8 of study, he attains a GPA of at least 3.25. All eligibility
9 requirements for receipt of the NJ STARS and NJ STARS II
10 scholarships, other than those altered pursuant to the provisions of
11 the bill, will remain in effect.