

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 3216

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JUNE 15, 2021

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 3216 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires various State entities to promote manufacturing career pathways for students and provides assistance to the manufacturing industry. Under the bill, the Secretary of Higher Education, in consultation with the Commissioner of Education, the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the New Jersey Council of County Vocational Schools, and representatives of the business community, will design a manufacturing career pathway to be offered through the county colleges and county vocational school districts to provide students interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing with the instruction and skills necessary to gain employment in the manufacturing or advanced manufacturing sectors. The manufacturing career pathway will include traditional and advanced manufacturing processes and methods of production including, but not limited to, the machinery, technology, tools, and equipment used in a wide range of manufacturing industries.

Under the bill, the secretary, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development and the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, will establish the New Jersey STEM Entrepreneur Fellowship Program in county colleges and four-year institutions of higher education to fund no less than 20 fellowships, administered by the secretary, which focus on supporting entrepreneurs in the STEM fields. The fellowships may be provided to individuals who have proven to the secretary that they have an idea to create, advance or develop a product in the STEM field which will have a beneficial impact on society and will result in a self-sustaining business in the future. The fellowships will be issued for three years each and will be used primarily to support the entrepreneurs in commercializing the idea and developing a well-structured business.

The bill establishes a “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program,” to be administered by a three-person commission which will include the Secretary of Higher Education, a representative of the

New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and a representative of the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development. The commission will annually award \$10 million to New Jersey institutions of higher education, proprietary institutions, and county vocational school districts for the purpose of establishing or expanding programs in the manufacturing fields.

The bill also requires the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, the Business Action Center in the Department of State, the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and representatives of business and industry, to establish and maintain a State-recognized list of industry-recognized credentials in the advanced manufacturing field. The list will assist county vocational school districts, institutions of higher education, and the workforce development system in developing appropriate educational programs to enable students to more adequately meet the advanced technical training needs in this field. Those entities will also identify courses of study for careers in emerging manufacturing industries, including careers in industrial marketing, mechanical engineering, computer science, electronics, and mechatronics.

Under the bill, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, will designate an employee of the Department of State to act as a liaison between the State and manufacturing businesses located in this State. The duties of the liaison will be to assist manufacturing businesses by:

- advertising manufacturing businesses' products or services nationally and internationally through the Business Action Center; and
- establishing a business referral service where manufacturing businesses may be referred to other State, federal, or private business resource organizations.

The Secretary of State is to work with State departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and authorities to direct resources, create incentives, and provide technological, financial, and workforce development opportunities for manufacturing businesses.

The bill also provides that the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, in consultation with the Business Action Center and an institution of higher education, may designate an institution of higher education or other entity as a manufacturing and production business resource center to provide services and assistance to manufacturing businesses to assist them to modernize, maximize their efficiency, and expand their production through the development and commercialization of innovative products. Under the bill, the authority will refer a manufacturing business deemed eligible to a manufacturing and production business resource center or other organization qualified to provide services to small and mid-

sized manufacturing businesses. The bill sets forth the various services that will be provided by the manufacturing businesses.

The bill also establishes in the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, the New Jersey Advanced Manufacturing Council. The council will consist of 11 members who are individuals with experience in the fields of labor, education, or workforce development or training. The bill directs the council to:

- convene and enable industry-led, private-public partnerships focused on engaging New Jersey institutions of higher education in manufacturing innovation;
- design and implement an advanced manufacturing initiative to facilitate collaboration and information sharing across State departments and agencies;
- assist private companies to enhance technological transfer in New Jersey manufacturing industries to help companies overcome technical obstacles to scaling up production of new technologies; and
- submit an annual report to the Governor, to the Legislature, and to the State Employment and Training Commission, of its assessments and recommendations to enhance State policy related to the advanced manufacturing industry in New Jersey.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to make various changes to the “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program” established pursuant to the bill. Specifically, the committee:

- modified the administration of the program to be conducted by a three-person commission which will include the Secretary of Higher Education, a representative of the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and a representative of the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development;
- broadened eligibility for Higher Education Manufacturing Grants to all institutions of higher education, proprietary institutions, and county vocational school districts, and modified the bill’s distribution of funding for this program to those groups; and
- defined “proprietary institution” eligible for a Higher Education Manufacturing Grant to be limited to proprietary institutions that have received accreditation from an accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education.