

SENATE BILL 839

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By: **Senator Rosapepe**

Introduced and read first time: February 3, 2012

Assigned to: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **College Affordability and Innovation Act of 2012**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Maryland Higher Education Commission to
4 recognize, endorse, and promote competency-based postsecondary education as
5 a certain component of Maryland's higher education system; requiring the
6 Commission to analyze and eliminate certain barriers to the delivery, funding,
7 and expansion of certain programs and partner with certain education providers
8 to integrate certain programs and services into the Maryland higher education
9 system; requiring the Commission to evaluate and recommend certain changes
10 to remove certain barriers and report the results to the General Assembly on or
11 before a certain date; requiring the Commission to develop and execute, in
12 cooperation with Western Governors University (WGU), Excelsior College, and
13 other comparable nonprofit institutions, a certain memorandum of
14 understanding that supports and endorses analyzing and taking steps to reduce
15 and remove certain obstacles for certain institutions, establishing certain
16 articulation and transfer agreements between certain community colleges and
17 certain institutions, examining, identifying, and sharing certain information for
18 purposes of outreach and education, integrating certain institutions into certain
19 plans, establishing certain institutions as a certain workforce training program
20 in the State, recommending certain institutions as a certain option for
21 Maryland adults in certain publications and Web sites, and incorporating
22 certain institutions and competency-based postsecondary education as a
23 resource in the Maryland State Plan for Postsecondary Education; requiring the
24 Commission to convene a workgroup consisting of certain representatives of
25 higher education and other stakeholders to review and make certain
26 recommendations for updating certain regulations; requiring a certain review to
27 include certain elements; requiring the Commission to develop and implement a
28 certain plan for soliciting and engaging certain out-of-state institutions who
29 may want to partner with certain in-State institutions of postsecondary
30 education to offer certain programs to certain students; requiring the
31 Commission to determine certain incentives that would facilitate and encourage

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 certain partnerships; and generally relating to encouraging and enhancing
2 innovative postsecondary educational opportunities.

3 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
4 MARYLAND, That, on or before December 31, 2012, the Maryland Higher Education
5 Commission shall:

6 (1) recognize, endorse, and promote competency-based postsecondary
7 education as an important component of Maryland's higher education system;

8 (2) analyze and eliminate regulatory and policy barriers to the
9 delivery, funding, and expansion of competency-based postsecondary education
10 programs;

11 (3) partner with regionally accredited, nonprofit competency-based
12 postsecondary education providers, as appropriate, to integrate academic programs
13 and services into the Maryland higher education system of postsecondary options
14 including, but not limited to, those provided by Western Governors University (WGU)
15 and Excelsior College;

16 (4) evaluate and recommend potential statutory changes that would
17 serve to remove regulatory or statutory barriers for qualified Maryland residents
18 enrolled in WGU, Excelsior College, or other comparable nonprofit institutions to
19 receive State need-based financial aid; and

20 (5) in accordance with § 2-1246 of the State Government Article,
21 report to the General Assembly regarding items (1) through (4).

22 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That the Maryland Higher
23 Education Commission shall develop and execute, in cooperation with WGU, Excelsior
24 College, and other comparable nonprofit institutions, a binding memorandum of
25 understanding that supports and endorses:

26 (1) analyzing and taking steps to reduce and remove any regulatory or
27 licensure obstacles for students and graduates of WGU, Excelsior College, and other
28 comparable nonprofit institutions;

29 (2) establishing individual and statewide articulation and transfer
30 agreements between community colleges and WGU, Excelsior College, and other
31 comparable nonprofit institutions;

32 (3) examining, identifying, and sharing information pertaining to
33 Maryland adults who have some college but no postsecondary credential for purposes
34 of outreach and education in order to help meet State higher education and workforce
35 goals;

1 (4) integrating WGU, Excelsior College, and other comparable
2 nonprofit institutions into workforce development plans, and establishing WGU,
3 Excelsior College, and other comparable nonprofit institutions as approved workforce
4 training programs in Maryland;

5 (5) recommending WGU, Excelsior College, and other comparable
6 nonprofit institutions as postsecondary options for Maryland adults in appropriate
7 publications and Web sites; and

8 (6) incorporating WGU, Excelsior College, and other nonprofit
9 competency-based postsecondary education institutions as a resource in the Maryland
10 State Plan for Postsecondary Education.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December
12 31, 2012, the Maryland Higher Education Commission shall convene a workgroup
13 consisting of representatives from each of the segments of higher education in the
14 State as well as other interested stakeholders to review and make recommendations
15 for updating provisions of COMAR relating to the minimum requirements for in-State
16 degree-granting institutions and the substantial equivalence requirements for
17 out-of-state degree-granting institutions. This review shall include a discussion of
18 removing the limits relating to graduation requirement credit for practica, clinical
19 experience, internships, cooperative work experiences, and prior learning that are
20 contained within COMAR 13B.02.02.16, as well as the nursing education program
21 requirements in COMAR 10.27.03 and the nursing examination and licensure
22 standards within COMAR 10.27.01.

23 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, on or before December
24 31, 2012, the Maryland Higher Education Commission shall develop and implement a
25 plan for soliciting and engaging out-of-state institutions of higher education who may
26 want to partner with in-State institutions of postsecondary education to offer joint
27 programs to Maryland students. The Commission shall determine the most effective
28 and feasible incentives that could be provided to public institutions of higher education
29 in the State in order to facilitate and encourage these partnerships.

30 SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
31 June 1, 2012.