

1 State of Arkansas  
2 93rd General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2021  
4

*As Engrossed: H4/5/21*

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1854

5 By: Representatives M. Gray, Barker, M. Davis, Murdock, McNair, M. Hodges, Dotson, Warren, Vaught,  
6 Hollowell

7 By: Senator D. Wallace  
8

## For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAM FOR  
11 STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
12 EDUCATION; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER  
13 PURPOSES.  
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### Subtitle

16 *TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE*  
17 *PROGRAM FOR STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR*  
18 *INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND TO*  
19 *DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.*  
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23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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25 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 51, Subchapter 1, is amended  
26 to add an additional section to read as follows:

27 6-51-106. Baccalaureate Degree Program – Two-year institutions of  
28 higher education.

29 (a) There is created, by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year,  
30 within the Division of Higher Education a program that shall establish and  
31 implement a Baccalaureate Degree Program for state-supported two-year  
32 institutions of higher education to offer education and training that leads  
33 to applied baccalaureate degrees and workforce baccalaureate degrees in high-  
34 demand career fields that shall include without limitation Bachelor of  
35 Science in Nursing degrees.

36 (b) The division shall work with the following entities without



1 limitation to establish and implement the program under subsection (a) of  
2 this section:

3 (1) The Department of Health;  
4 (2) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing; and  
5 (3) Any other individual or entity involved in applied or  
6 workforce education.

7 (c) The division shall develop an application process and procedure by  
8 which each state-supported two-year institution of higher education may apply  
9 to participate in the program under this section.

10 (d) Offering education or training that leads to baccalaureate degrees  
11 under this section does not convert a state-supported two-year institution of  
12 higher education to a four-year institution of higher education as long as  
13 the total number of baccalaureate degrees offered under this section accounts  
14 for less than ten percent (10%) of the degrees or certificates awarded by the  
15 state-supported two-year institution of higher education.

16  
17 SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the  
18 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the ongoing public health  
19 emergency has increased the strain on the state's public health system and  
20 resources; that the shortage of nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing  
21 degree has been emphasized by the ongoing public health emergency; that there  
22 are additional high-demand career fields that have been highlighted by the  
23 ongoing public health emergency; and that this act is immediately necessary  
24 in order to create accelerated, streamlined, and more affordable  
25 opportunities by which those choosing health care, nursing, and other high-  
26 demand career fields as their vocation may obtain advanced degrees to enter  
27 the high-need workforce earlier and at less cost. Therefore, an emergency is  
28 declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the  
29 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective  
30 on:

31 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;  
32 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,  
33 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the  
34 bill; or  
35 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is  
36 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

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*/s/M. Gray*