



General Assembly

February Session, 2020

Governor's Bill No. 15

LCO No. 507



Referred to Committee on HIGHER EDUCATION AND
EMPLOYMENT ADVANCEMENT

Introduced by:

SEN. LOONEY, 11th Dist.

SEN. DUFF, 25th Dist.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ, 30th Dist.

REP. RITTER M., 1st Dist.

**AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING HIGHER EDUCATION.**

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General
Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. Section 10a-174 of the 2020 supplement to the general
2 statutes is repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof
3 (*Effective from passage*):

4 (a) As used in this section:

5 (1) "Award" means the greater of: (A) The unpaid portion, if any, of a
6 qualifying student's eligible institutional costs after subtracting his or
7 her financial aid, or (B) a minimum award of two hundred fifty dollars;

8 (2) "Eligible institutional costs" means the tuition and required fees
9 incurred each semester by an individual student that are established by
10 the Board of Regents for Higher Education for the regional community-

11 technical colleges;

12 (3) "Financial aid" means the sum of all scholarships, grants and
13 federal, state and institutional aid received by a qualifying student.
14 "Financial aid" does not include any federal, state or private student
15 loans received by a qualifying student;

16 (4) "Qualifying student" means any person who (A) graduated from
17 a public or nonpublic high school in the state, (B) not later than one year
18 after graduating from high school, enrolls as a full-time student for the
19 fall semester of 2020, or any semester thereafter, for the first time at a
20 regional community-technical college in a program leading to a degree
21 or certificate and continues to be enrolled as a full-time student at a
22 regional community-technical college, (C) is classified as an in-state
23 student pursuant to section 10a-29, (D) is making satisfactory academic
24 progress while enrolled at a regional community-technical college, (E)
25 has completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid, [and] (F)
26 has an expected family contribution for educational costs, as computed
27 from the student's Free Application for Federal Student Aid, of seven
28 thousand five hundred dollars or less, and (G) has accepted all available
29 financial aid;

30 (5) "Full-time student" means a student who is enrolled at a regional
31 community-technical college and (A) is carrying twelve or more credit
32 hours in a semester, or (B) has a learning disability documented with
33 the regional community-technical college in which he or she is enrolled
34 and is enrolled in the maximum number of credit hours that is feasible
35 for such student to attempt in a semester, as determined by such
36 student's academic advisor; and

37 (6) "Semester" means the fall or spring semester of an academic year.
38 "Semester" does not include a summer semester or session.

39 (b) Not later than January 1, 2020, the Board of Regents for Higher
40 Education shall (1) establish a debt-free community college program to
41 make awards to qualifying students each semester, (2) adopt rules,
42 procedures and forms necessary to implement the debt-free community

43 college program, and (3) submit a report outlining such rules,
44 procedures and forms, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-
45 4a, to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having
46 cognizance of matters relating to higher education.

47 (c) For the fall semester of 2020, and each semester thereafter, the
48 Board of Regents for Higher Education shall make awards to qualifying
49 students within available appropriations. An award shall be available
50 to a qualifying student for the first seventy-two credit hours earned by
51 the qualifying student during the first thirty-six months that such
52 student is enrolled at a regional community-technical college, provided
53 the qualifying student meets and continues to meet the requirements of
54 this section. The board shall not use an award to supplant any financial
55 aid, including, but not limited to, state or institutional aid, otherwise
56 available to a qualifying student.

57 (d) (1) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, the Board of Regents
58 for Higher Education may expend not more than two million one
59 hundred thirty thousand eight hundred forty-two dollars from available
60 appropriations to provide additional academic advisors at any regional
61 community-technical college.

62 (2) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021, and each fiscal year
63 thereafter, the Board of Regents for Higher Education may expend not
64 more than five hundred thousand dollars from available appropriations
65 to support marketing of the debt-free community college program
66 established pursuant to subsection (b) of this section.

67 [(d)] (e) (1) Any qualifying student who takes an administratively
68 approved medical or personal leave of absence from a regional
69 community-technical college may continue to qualify for the debt-free
70 community college program upon resuming his or her enrollment as a
71 full-time student at a regional community-technical college, provided
72 such student continues to meet the requirements of this section upon
73 reenrollment and the total amount of time of all approved leaves of
74 absence does not exceed six months.

75 (2) Any qualifying student who is a member of the armed forces
76 called to active duty during any semester may continue to qualify for
77 the debt-free community college program upon resuming his or her
78 enrollment as a full-time student at a regional community-technical
79 college, provided such student (A) continues to meet the requirements
80 of this section upon reenrollment, and (B) reenrolls not later than four
81 years after the date on which such student is released from active duty.

82 [(e)] (f) Not later than March 1, 2021, and October 1, 2021, and each
83 semester thereafter, the Board of Regents for Higher Education shall
84 report, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint
85 standing committees of the General Assembly having cognizance of
86 matters relating to higher education and employment advancement and
87 appropriations regarding the debt-free community college program,
88 including, but not limited to, (1) the number of qualifying students
89 enrolled at the regional community-technical colleges during each
90 semester, (2) the number of qualifying students receiving minimum
91 awards and the number of qualifying students receiving awards for the
92 unpaid portion of eligible institutional costs, (3) the average number of
93 credit hours the qualifying students enrolled in each semester and the
94 average number of credit hours the qualifying students completed each
95 semester, (4) the average amount of the award made to qualifying
96 students under this section for the unpaid portion of eligible
97 institutional costs, and (5) the completion rates of qualifying students
98 receiving awards under this section by degree or certificate program.

99 Sec. 2. Subsection (a) of section 10a-55i of the general statutes is
100 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
101 *passage*):

102 (a) There is established a Higher Education Consolidation Committee
103 which shall be convened by the chairpersons of the joint standing
104 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters
105 relating to higher education or such chairpersons' designee, who shall
106 be a member of such joint standing committee. The membership of the
107 Higher Education Consolidation Committee shall consist of the higher

108 education subcommittee on appropriations and the chairpersons, vice
109 chairpersons and ranking members of the joint standing committees of
110 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to higher
111 education and appropriations. The Higher Education Consolidation
112 Committee shall establish a meeting and public hearing schedule for
113 purposes of receiving updates from (1) the Board of Regents for Higher
114 Education on the progress of the consolidation of the state system of
115 higher education pursuant to this section, section 4-9c, subsection (g) of
116 section 5-160, section 5-199d, subsection (a) of section 7-323k, subsection
117 (a) of section 7-608, subsection (a) of section 10-9, section 10-155d,
118 subdivision (14) of section 10-183b, sections 10a-1a to 10a-1d, inclusive,
119 10a-3 and 10a-3a, [subsection (a) of section 10a-6a,] sections [10a-6b,]
120 10a-8, 10a-10a to 10a-11a, inclusive, 10a-17d and 10a-22a, subsections (f)
121 and (h) of section 10a-22b, subsections (c) and (d) of section 10a-22d,
122 sections 10a-22h and 10a-22k, subsection (a) of section 10a-22n, sections
123 10a-22r, 10a-22s, 10a-22u, 10a-22v, 10a-22x and 10a-34 to 10a-35a,
124 inclusive, subsection (a) of section 10a-48a, sections 10a-71 and 10a-72,
125 subsections (c) and (f) of section 10a-77, section 10a-88, subsection (a) of
126 section 10a-89, subsection (c) of section 10a-99 and sections 10a-102, 10a-
127 104, 10a-105, 10a-109e, 10a-143 and 10a-168a, and (2) the Board of
128 Regents for Higher Education and The University of Connecticut on the
129 program approval process for the constituent units. The Higher
130 Education Consolidation Committee shall convene its first meeting on
131 or before September 15, 2011, and meet not less than once every two
132 months.

133 Sec. 3. Subsection (f) of section 10a-11b of the general statutes is
134 repealed and the following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from*
135 *passage*):

136 (f) Not later than January 1, 2018, for purposes of implementing the
137 higher education strategic master plan pursuant to subsection (b) of this
138 section, the commission, in collaboration with the Office of Policy and
139 Management, shall establish two standing subcommittees and may
140 establish any working groups necessary to supplement the work of the
141 subcommittees or work. The chairperson and vice-chairperson of the

142 commission shall appoint the members of the standing subcommittees
 143 and working groups, and may appoint members to such standing
 144 subcommittees and working groups who are not members of the
 145 commission.

146 (1) One standing subcommittee shall focus on data, metrics and
 147 accountability, and build upon the work of the [Higher Education
 148 Coordinating Council and] Preschool through 20 and Workforce
 149 Information Network in its measures and data. Such measures shall be
 150 used to assess the progress of each public institution of higher education
 151 toward meeting the commission's goals. The subcommittee shall
 152 collaborate with the Labor Department to (A) produce periodic reports,
 153 capable of being sorted by student age, on the employment status, job
 154 retention and earnings of students enrolled in academic and noncredit
 155 vocational courses and programs, both prior to enrollment and after
 156 completion of such courses and programs, who leave the constituent
 157 units upon graduation or otherwise, and (B) develop an annual
 158 affordability index for public higher education that is based on state-
 159 wide median family income. The subcommittee shall submit annual
 160 reports to the commission and the constituent units.

161 (2) One standing subcommittee shall focus on the higher education
 162 strategic master plan, analyzing the plans submitted since 2014 and
 163 making recommendations to the commission on key areas. The
 164 commission may recommend key areas of focus each year and require
 165 the standing subcommittee to report to the commission on such key
 166 areas.

167 Sec. 4. (*Effective from passage*) Sections 10a-6a and 10a-6b of the general
 168 statutes are repealed.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	10a-174
Sec. 2	<i>from passage</i>	10a-55i(a)
Sec. 3	<i>from passage</i>	10a-11b(f)

Sec. 4	<i>from passage</i>	Repealer section
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Statement of Purpose:

To implement the Governor's budget recommendations.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]