

The House Committee on Higher Education offers the following substitute to SB 112:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
AN ACT

1 To amend Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to
2 vocational, technical, and adult education, so as to provide for a pilot program whereby
3 qualifying third parties or the state board provide instruction and other services for certain
4 adults to attain a high school diploma; to provide for program requirements; to provide for
5 waivers and variances; to provide for definitions; to provide for rules and regulations; to
6 provide for automatic repeal; to provide for an annual report; to provide for related matters;
7 to provide for a short title; to provide for legislative findings and intent; to repeal conflicting
8 laws; and for other purposes.

9 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

10 **SECTION 1.**

11 This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "High School Diploma for Adult Learners
12 Act."

SECTION 2.

13

14 (a) The General Assembly finds that:

15 (1) The Georgia Department of Economic Development works to expand Georgia's role
16 as an economic hub for business;17 (2) Over 37,500 new jobs in Georgia have been recently created as a result of the largest
18 economic development projects in the history of the state, and more than 85 percent of
19 those new jobs will be created outside of the metro Atlanta area;20 (3) It is imperative to develop a skilled workforce to meet current and future needs across
21 the industry spectrum, and creative programs are necessary to empower these Georgians
22 to gain the education and skills necessary to fill these positions; and23 (4) High school diploma programs for adult learners have proven successful in other states
24 at providing the support services necessary for persons who lack the skills or credentials
25 required to participate in higher educational opportunities or workforce development
26 programs offered by technical college systems, and public-private partnerships can
27 effectively leverage limited state resources to help meet our workforce needs.28 (b) It is the intent of the Georgia General Assembly that by empowering Georgians to obtain
29 their high school diplomas and obtain industry recognized certifications, they can excel in
30 the workforce and improve the life trajectory for themselves and their families.**SECTION 3.**

31

32 Chapter 4 of Title 20 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to vocational,
33 technical, and adult education, is amended by adding a new article to read as follows:

34

"ARTICLE 835 20-4-160.36 (a) As used in this article, the term:

- 37 (1) 'Eligible student' means an individual who:
38 (A) Resides in this state;
39 (B) Is over 21 years of age but under 35 years of age at the time of enrollment;
40 (C) Has not attained a high school diploma;
41 (D) Does not meet any of the ineligibility criteria provided for in subsection (b) of
42 Code Section 20-3-519.1; and
43 (E) Has previously been enrolled in a high school in this state.
- 44 (2) 'High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners' and 'program' mean the pilot
45 program provided for in this article.
- 46 (3) 'State board' means the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia.
47 (b)(1) The state board is authorized to establish a pilot program to allow eligible students
48 to qualify for enrollment in the High School Diploma Program for Adult Learners
49 facilitated by participating units of the Technical College System of Georgia and, upon
50 successful completion of the program, to be awarded a high school diploma. The purpose
51 of the pilot program is to assess the feasibility of implementing a state funded program
52 for eligible students to enroll and participate in a program facilitated by a unit of the
53 Technical College System of Georgia and provided by qualifying third parties or the state
54 board which, upon successful completion, allows eligible students to earn high school
55 diplomas.
- 56 (2) To implement the pilot program, notwithstanding any other provision of law to the
57 contrary, the state board and the State Board of Education shall be authorized to waive
58 or provide variances to state laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures and to
59 provisions of this title that may be reasonably necessary to meet the goals of the pilot
60 program. Such waivers or variances shall automatically expire at the end of the pilot
61 program unless an earlier expiration is provided for.
- 62 (3) The pilot program shall include at least two distinct programs offered by third parties
63 or the state board and shall stand automatically repealed on June 30, 2028.

64 (4)(A) Subject to appropriations specifically for the purpose of this pilot program, the
65 state board is authorized to allocate funds appropriated by the General Assembly for the
66 implementation of the pilot program to third parties which are regionally accredited or
67 partnered with a regionally accredited entity or the state board and which agree to meet
68 all program requirements and to provide the following to eligible students at no cost to
69 such students:

70 (i) Instruction and related services provided by highly qualified teachers certificated
71 by the Professional Standards Commission;

72 (ii) An instructional program which utilizes evidence based curricula and
73 instructional strategies for adult learners; and

74 (iii) If offered as part of the program, dedicated program facilities which shall meet
75 minimum requirements established by state law or state board policy and which shall
76 include on-site career and academic counseling services, child care services, and
77 transportation assistance programs.

78 (B) Funds allocated pursuant to subparagraph (A) of this paragraph to qualified third
79 parties or the state board shall be paid based on the completion of courses toward the
80 attainment of a high school diploma.

81 (C) The state board is authorized to withhold up to 2 percent of the funds provided for
82 in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph for use in administering the duties required
83 pursuant to this article; provided, however, that any amount withheld pursuant to this
84 subparagraph shall be spent solely and directly on expenses incurred by the Technical
85 College System of Georgia in performing the duties required by this article.

86 (5) Each pilot program location must annually report the following information to the
87 state board and to the General Assembly by July 31 of each year of the pilot program:

88 (A) The number of eligible students enrolled in the program during the preceding year;

89 (B) The number of courses completed by eligible students enrolled in the program
90 during the preceding year;

- 91 (C) The demographics of the eligible students enrolled in the program during the
92 preceding year, including age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and county of
93 residence;
- 94 (D) The completion rates of the eligible students enrolled in the program during the
95 preceding year; and
- 96 (E) The outcomes for eligible students who complete the program as of the date of
97 completion and two years after completion, including information concerning such
98 students' job placement outcomes and matriculation into higher education and any other
99 information concerning outcomes required by the state board.
- 100 (c) The state board shall determine the specific competencies concerning the skills and
101 knowledge needed for completion of each component of the program; provided, however,
102 that the state board shall make such determination regarding the skills and knowledge
103 needed to meet the requirements for a high school diploma as provided for in this article
104 in consultation with the State Board of Education and the Department of Education.
- 105 (d) The state board shall award a high school diploma to any eligible student enrolled in
106 the program provided for in this article who completes all requirements of the program,
107 including the rigorous coursework required and facilitated by a participating unit of the
108 Technical College System of Georgia and provided by participating third parties or the
109 state board.
- 110 (e) The state board, in consultation with the State Board of Education, shall establish rules
111 and regulations to implement the provisions of this article."

112 **SECTION 4.**

113 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.