

TENNESSEE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FISCAL REVIEW COMMITTEE



FISCAL NOTE

HB 2625 - SB 2528

March 10, 2024

SUMMARY OF BILL: Requires the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) and each governing board of a public institution of higher education to regularly update their rules regarding accreditation to conform with changes made by, and to take advantage of new flexibilities and data sources made available by, the United States Department of Education or by an enactment of the Congress of the United States.

Requires THEC by December 31st, 2024 to identify and determine the accrediting agencies or associations best suited to serve as an accreditor for public institutions of higher education in this state. Further requires, by December 31st, 2024 that THEC and each governing board of a public institution of higher education in this state to amend their rules regarding accreditation to ensure that each institution may choose to pursue accreditation by an eligible accreditor.

Prohibits an accrediting agency or association from compelling a public institution of higher education in this state to violate any state law. Authorizes a public institution of higher education in this state that is negatively affected by retaliatory or adverse action taken against the institution by an accrediting agency or association to bring a civil action against the accrediting agency or association in a court of competent jurisdiction.

FISCAL IMPACT:

NOT SIGNIFICANT

Assumptions:

- The proposed legislation does not require any public institution to change its accrediting agencies.
- All of the public institutions of higher education are accredited by The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).
- The U.S. Department of Education's website states that SACSCOC is recognized as a reliable authority concerning the quality of education or training offered by the institutions of higher education or higher education programs they accredit.
- In the event of a public institution changing its accreditation agency, each institution could incur increases in expenditures of over \$10,000 more for application fees alone; however, it is not anticipated that any institution will be required to change its accreditor; therefore, any impact is considered to be not significant.
- THEC can comply with the provisions of the legislation within existing resources without a significant impact to state government.

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CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krista Lee Carsner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

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