

SENATE BILL 2238

By Haile

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49,
relative to financial aid.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-902, is amended by adding the following as a new subdivision:

"Information technology credentialing institution" means an institution that meets the following:

(A) At least fifty percent (50%) of the institution's programs must prepare the students enrolled in the institution for third-party industry recognized credential exams related to the programs in which the students are enrolled. The third-party industry recognized credentials must include, but are not limited to:

- (i) CompTIA Project+ Certification;
- (ii) CompTIA's A+ Help Desk-Oriented Certification;
- (iii) CompTIA Network+ Certification;
- (iv) CompTIA Security+ Certification;
- (v) Microsoft MTA Introduction to Programming with JavaScript Certification; and
- (vi) Microsoft Data Analyst Associate Certification;

(B) The institution requires each student who is enrolled in a program that prepares the student for a third-party industry recognized credential exam to take the third-party industry recognized credential exam related to the program in which the student is enrolled in order to be eligible for graduation;

(C) The institution is a nonprofit entity;

(D) The institution is authorized to operate under § 49-7-2008;

(E) The institution is subject to an external annual audit, in addition to the requirements of § 49-7-2018(g); and

(F) The institution is domiciled in this state and offers in-person instructional opportunities;

SECTION 2. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-921(a), is amended by adding the language "or an information technology credentialing institution" between the word "system" and the word "shall".

SECTION 3. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-921(g), is amended by designating the existing language as subdivision (1) and adding the following as a new subdivision:

(2) A student who is eligible for both a Tennessee reconnect grant under § 49-4-944 and a Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant may receive both awards for the sole purpose of attending an information technology credentialing institution; provided, that the total amount that a student receives from both grants must not exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

SECTION 4. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-921, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

Prior to enrolling students with a Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant, an information technology credentialing institution must have continually operated in this state for the three (3) immediately preceding years.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-944(c), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting the following:

(c)

(1) Except as provided in subdivision (c)(2), to be eligible for a Tennessee reconnect grant, a student must:

(A) Not have previously earned an associate or baccalaureate degree;

(B) Not be ineligible for the grant under § 49-4-904;

(C) Have been a resident of this state as required by § 49-4-905(a)(1);

(D) Complete the FAFSA for each academic year in which the Tennessee reconnect grant is received in accordance with the schedule determined by TSAC;

(E) Be an independent student as determined by the FAFSA;

(F) Be admitted to an eligible postsecondary institution and enrolled in courses leading to completion of an eligible program of study; and

(G) Participate in a college success program through the Tennessee reconnect community initiative as created by the Tennessee higher education commission.

(2) A student who has been awarded the Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant is eligible to also receive a Tennessee reconnect grant for the sole purpose of attending an information technology credentialing institution, if the student:

(A) Has not previously earned an associate or baccalaureate degree;

(B) Is not ineligible for the grant under § 49-4-904;

(C) Has been a resident of this state as required by § 49-4-905(a)(1); and

(D) Is admitted to an information technology credentialing institution.

SECTION 6. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-944(d), is amended by deleting the subsection and substituting the following:

(d)

(1) Except as provided in subdivision (d)(2), to continue to be eligible for a Tennessee reconnect grant, a student must:

(A) Enroll in classes at an eligible postsecondary institution that lead to completion of an eligible program of study;

(B) Maintain a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.0 at the end of each academic year as determined by the institution attended;

(C) Maintain continuous enrollment at an eligible postsecondary institution;

(D) Complete the renewal FAFSA each academic year as specified by TSAC;

(E) Attend at least as a part-time student; and

(F) Participate in a college success program through the Tennessee reconnect community initiative as created by the Tennessee higher education commission.

(2) To continue to be eligible to receive the Tennessee reconnect grant under subdivision (c)(2) and the Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant, a student must:

(A) Enroll in classes at an information technology credentialing institution;

(B) Maintain a passing score at the end of each academic year as determined by the information technology credentialing institution attended;

(C) Maintain continuous enrollment at an information technology credentialing institution; and

(D) Attend at least as a part-time student.

SECTION 7. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-944(h), is amended by designating the existing language as subdivision (1) and adding the following as a new subdivision:

(2) Subject to the amounts appropriated by the general assembly, a student who is eligible for both a Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant under § 49-4-921 and a Tennessee reconnect grant may receive both awards for the sole purpose of attending an information technology credentialing institution; provided, that the total amount that a student receives from both grants must not exceed four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

SECTION 8. Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 49-4-944, is amended by adding the following as a new subsection:

Prior to enrolling students with a Tennessee reconnect grant, an information technology credentialing institution must have continually operated in this state for the three (3) immediately preceding years.

SECTION 9. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 49, Chapter 4, Part 9, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

The Tennessee higher education commission shall evaluate outcomes associated during the first three (3) years that qualified students may receive both the Wilder-Naifeh technical skills grant and the Tennessee reconnect grant for the sole purpose of attending an information technology credentialing institution. The

commission shall report its findings to the education instruction committee and the education administration committee of the house of representatives and the education committee of the senate no later than January 15, 2026. The report must include:

- (1) Graduation rates;
- (2) Job placement rates;
- (3) Program retention rates;
- (4) Wage increase for graduates;
- (5) Overall impact to the information technology workforce in the region where scholarships are awarded; and
- (6) Impact to the state's overall scholarship funds.

SECTION 10. The Tennessee student assistance corporation is authorized to promulgate rules to effectuate the purposes of this act. The rules must be promulgated in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 5.

SECTION 11. This act is not an appropriation of funds, and funds shall not be obligated or expended pursuant to this act unless the funds are specifically appropriated by the general appropriations act.

SECTION 12. This act takes effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it, and applies to the 2022-2023 school year and subsequent school years.