

2011 Virginia Assembly Session

VA-CCA Legislative Report

1/30/2011

By far the major legislative education proposal before the 2011 session of the Virginia General Assembly is the legislation that flowed from the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Reform - referred to as the "Top Jobs" bill.

SB 1459 and HB 2510 provide new direction regarding how Virginia is going to meet the challenges facing higher education going forward. The 27 page bill, which you can read by clicking on either bill from the attachment, provides numerous ways to both remake higher education, and

meet the governor's goals of 100,000 new degrees in the next 15 years. It does this by increasing existing financial aid options, creating a new and powerful Higher Education Advisory Committee, and pumping an additional \$50 million into the state budget for higher education. Most legislators are very supportive of this proposal and it is expected to pass both House and Senate easily, and to be quickly signed into law by the governor.

Two groups aren't that excited about the legislation. One is SCHEV, which is looking at a 6% budget cut, which translates into a quarter of a million dollars in 2012.

The other group is us! For the most part, our sector and our students will see little benefit from the legislation and that is very disappointing given that the Executive Order that created the Commission specifically indicated the inclusion of our sector in this reform effort. VCCA has met, and had numerous discussions, with high-ranking officials in the Secretary of Education's office regarding this matter. In

addition, VCCA member National College has been communicating with the Executive Branch in an effort to rectify some of our concerns.

At this juncture we have received promises of greater inclusion in the future, but not much in the way of amending the current legislation. These efforts are ongoing, however, and opportunities still exist to modify portions of both bills. But time is running out quickly. We continue to discuss this issue with administration officials and legislators.

The other two bills of interest are HB 1960 and SB 1439. Both tighten down on the eligibility of schools to receive TAG (Tuition Assistance Grants) funds. VCCA visited with the patrons of these bills and also spoke with the lobbying for the not-for-profit schools, and all three indicated that the bill was intended to keep out of state not-for-profits with satellite campuses in Virginia from having access to TAG money.

Either way, the new language would create further barriers to our inclusion in the future.

Mark Singer
Executive Director
Virginia Career College Assoc.
1108 E. Main St., Suite 1200
Richmond, VA 23219
ph - 804.346.2783
fx - 804.346.8287
www.va-cca.org

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Composite view with notes

| Bills | Committee | Last action | <u>Date</u> |
|--|---|---|--------------------|
| HB 1465 - Peace - Higher educational institutions; admission of illegal aliens. | (H) Committee for Courts of Justice | (H) Subcommittee recommends reporting with amendment(s) (4-Y 2-N) | 01/28/11 |
| HB 1505 - Putney - Higher Educational Institutions Bond Act of 2011; created. | (H) Committee on Appropriations | (H) VOTE: BLOCK VOTE PASSAGE (95-Y 0-N) | 01/28/11 |
| HB 1960 - Rust - Tuition Assistance Grant Program; amends criteria to be eligible to receive tuition assistance. | (H) Committee on Education | (H) Subcommittee recommends reporting with amendment(s) (7-Y 0-N) | 01/25/11 |
| HB 2510 - Cox, M.K. - Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011; established, report. | (H) Committee on Appropriations | (H) Read first time | 01/28/11 |
| SB 819 - Edwards - Two-Year College Scholarship Match Program; established. | (S) Committee on Education and Health | (S) Read third time and passed Senate (39-Y 0-N) | 01/25/11 |
| SB 1439 - Herring - Tuition Assistance Grant Program; amends criteria for higher educational institutions. | (S) Committee on Education and Health | (S) Assigned Education sub: Higher Education | 01/25/11 |
| SB 1459 - Houck - Virginia Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011; established, report. | (S) Committee on Finance | (S) Rereferred to Finance | 01/24/11 |