

SENATE LABOR COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1831

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 1, 2026

The Senate Labor Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1831.

As amended, this bill requires the Commissioner of Labor and Workplace Development to establish a dedicated youth apprenticeship program for students aged 16 to 21 years old. Under the bill, the program would be required to include, but not be limited to, creating career-connected learning in high school for students in 11th grade and 12th grade; combining paid, on-the-job training with dual-enrollment in community colleges; and creating pre-apprenticeship pathways into registered programs in high-demand sectors, including but not limited to health care, information technology, advanced manufacturing, and green jobs.

The bill requires the commissioner, in consultation with the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, to develop standardized curriculum for apprenticeship-related instruction; offer no-cost related technical instruction to apprentices; and expand the college credit for apprenticeship initiative, awarding credit for on-the-job training.

The bill provides that employers who participate in the program will be provided with up to \$5,000 per apprentice in tax credits or direct grants, provided that certain criteria are met, including but not limited to: paying apprentices at least 60 percent of journeyperson wages, escalating annually; committing to non-discriminatory recruitment and retention practices; and reporting annually to the department demographics, wage progression, and completion rates of apprentices. Employers engaged in the construction industry are excluded from the tax credit and direct grant programs.

The bill requires State agencies and public contractors of large capital projects to develop or participate in registered apprenticeship programs. Under the bill, priority will be given to green energy and public infrastructure apprenticeships and partnerships with union-based Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees.

The bill establishes an “Apprenticeship Advancement Fund” to effectuate the provisions of the bill, which includes, among other provisions, wraparound support services for qualified low-income apprentices and other expenses that prevent young workers from completing an apprenticeship.

The bill requires the department to review proposed programs for improper duplication. The department will also issue an annual report, published on the department's Internet website that includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) apprenticeship participation by industry, gender, race, ethnicity, and geography;
- (2) the number of participants that have successfully transitioned from pre-apprenticeship to registered apprenticeship, completion rates and post-apprenticeship employment outcomes
- (3) State savings from reduced reliance on student aid and unemployment insurance; and
- (4) the amount of funding provided by the program.

Finally, the bill provides that \$25 million shall be allocated annually commencing in fiscal year 2026, for the purpose of funding the youth apprenticeship program established by the bill, including but not limited to providing start-up grants for newly registered apprenticeship programs; tuition-free related technical instruction at public vocational schools and community colleges; and wraparound support services for qualified low-income apprentices, such as transportation, childcare, and tools.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to:

- (1) exclude construction employers from the tax credit and grant programs;
- (2) prioritize pre-apprenticeship programs operated by, or in formal partnership with, registered apprenticeship partners, with priority given to union-based Joint Apprenticeship Training Committees;
- (3) expand direct financial assistance to participants;
- (4) require the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to review proposed construction programs for improper duplication and require corrective action, suspend or terminate funding, or recover funding where appropriate;
- (5) clarify that nothing in the bill supersedes existing curricula, entrance requirements, selection procedures or training standards of established registered apprenticeship programs;
- (6) require the department to report progress on advancement, retention, and program spending; and
- (7) make technical changes to nomenclature.