

ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

ASSEMBLY, No. 895

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MARCH 5, 2020

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Assembly Bill No. 895.

The New Jersey Better Educational Savings Trust (NJBEST) Program provides families with the opportunity to save for their child's higher education and make tax-free withdrawals for qualified education expenses. For qualified beneficiaries, NJBEST provides a one-time scholarship of no less than \$500 at the time of a beneficiary's initial attendance or enrollment at a New Jersey institution.

This bill provides that the scholarship may be awarded to a student in any semester of attendance or enrollment. Under the current statutory language, the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority has had to deny scholarships to students who did not realize that they had to apply in their first semester of enrollment. This bill will correct that problem and ensure that eligible students receive the scholarship to which they are entitled.

This bill was pre-filed for introduction in the 2020-2021 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.