[First Reprint]

ASSEMBLY, No. 1625

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

219th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2020 SESSION

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SYNOPSIS

Directs DOE to develop outreach program to encourage young women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in STEM.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As reported by the Senate Education Committee on January 14, 2021, with amendments.

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 6/3/2021)

AN ACT establishing a STEM outreach program and supplementing chapter 6 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. The science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) field has become extremely important for the success of the innovation economy both in New Jersey and the United States, and STEM education is critical in developing a globally competitive workforce in the 21st century.

b. Despite the increasing demand for workers with experience in STEM, women and minority groups are largely underrepresented in the STEM workforce and in STEM education at the post-secondary level.

c. According to the National Science Foundation's Science and Engineering Indicators for 2016, women comprised only 29 percent of the science and engineering workforce, despite making up half of the total college-educated workforce in the United States.

d. The gender gap in the national STEM workforce is also evidenced in New Jersey as women made up only 25.1 percent of the State's STEM workforce in October 2018, according to the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development.

e. Although women comprise more than half of the nation's college students, they are underrepresented in many STEM-related post-secondary degree programs, especially in engineering and the computer sciences.

f. Racial and ethnic minorities are similarly underrepresented in the STEM field as Hispanics, blacks, and Native Americans/Alaska Natives make up a smaller share of the science and engineering workforce (11 percent) than their proportion in the general population (27 percent of the United States working age 33 population).

g. In 2012, only 11.2 percent of bachelor's degrees in science and engineering, 8.2 percent of master's degrees in science and engineering, and 4.1 percent of doctorate degrees in science and engineering were awarded to minority women.

h. Encouraging young women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in STEM professions and increasing opportunities in the STEM field are important means for realizing greater economic innovation, success, and equality.

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets [thus] in the above bill is not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.
Matter enclosed in superscript numerals has been adopted as follows:
[1]Senate SED committee amendments adopted January 14, 2021.

2. a. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education and the Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology, shall develop and administer an outreach program to encourage young women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

b. The department, in developing and administering the outreach program, shall:

(1) provide elementary and secondary school students, especially young women and minorities, with opportunities to increase their exposure to the STEM field;

(2) distribute various printed materials to schools, encouraging young women and minorities to pursue post-secondary degrees and careers in STEM;

(3) organize and conduct mentoring sessions, in which individuals working or pursuing a post-secondary degree in the STEM field engage with elementary and secondary school students;

(4) establish a mentoring program that partners STEM professionals and STEM post-secondary students with elementary and secondary school students;

(5) create programs to increase the recruitment and retention of underrepresented faculty in STEM subject areas; and

(6) undertake any other activities the Commissioner of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education and the chair of the Commission on Science, Innovation and Technology, deems necessary to effectuate the purposes of the outreach program.

[1]For purposes of this act, STEM shall include, but not be limited to, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer science.[1]

3. This act shall take effect 30 days after enactment.