

§1 –
C.18A:71B-2.4
§2 –
C.18A:71B-5.1
§3 –
C.18A:71B-85a
§4 –
C.18A:71B-86.4c

P.L. 2020, CHAPTER 31, *approved May 15, 2020*
Senate, No. 2356

- 1 **AN ACT** concerning student financial aid and the 2020 public health
2 state of emergency and supplementing various parts of the
3 statutory law.
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- 5 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
6 of New Jersey:
7
- 8 1. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
9 exclude the spring 2020 semester from a student’s total lifetime
10 eligibility limits for all State financial aid programs administered
11 pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-1 et seq., if the student was unable to
12 complete the semester due to the public health state of emergency
13 declared to exist in New Jersey by Executive Order 103 dated
14 March 9, 2020.
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- 16 2. The Higher Education Student Assistance Authority shall
17 waive the amounts that a student is required to return under
18 N.J.S.18A:71B-5, if the institution has already disbursed the
19 student’s State financial aid and the student withdraws or reduces
20 his credits to below full-time, or in the case of a part-time State
21 tuition aid grant reduces his credits to below half-time, due to the
22 public health state of emergency declared to exist in New Jersey by
23 Executive Order 103 dated March 9, 2020.
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- 25 3. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
26 student enrolled in a county college in the 2019-2020 academic year
27 shall remain eligible for a scholarship under the NJ STARS
28 Program in the third semester of county college enrollment. To
29 remain eligible for the scholarship in the fourth and fifth semesters
30 of county college enrollment, a student who was enrolled in the
31 2019-2020 academic year shall attain a grade point average of at
32 least 3.0 by the start of the student’s fourth semester of county
33 college enrollment.
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- 35 4. a. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
36 student enrolled in a county college in the 2019-2020 academic year
37 shall attain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 upon

1 graduation from the county college to be eligible for a scholarship
2 under the NJ STARS II Program for the student's third academic
3 year of study.

4 b. Notwithstanding any law or regulation to the contrary, a
5 student enrolled in a four-year institution of higher education in the
6 2019-2020 academic year shall remain eligible for a scholarship
7 under the NJ STARS II Program in his third semester of study at a
8 four-year institution. To remain eligible for a scholarship in the
9 fourth semester of study, a student who was enrolled in the 2019-
10 2020 academic year shall attain a grade point average of at least a
11 3.25 based on the student's performance during the first three
12 semesters of study at the four-year institution.

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14 5. This act shall take effect immediately.
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17 STATEMENT

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19 This bill addresses certain issues related to State financial aid
20 programs that have arisen due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The bill
21 provides that the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority
22 will exclude the spring 2020 semester from a student's total lifetime
23 eligibility limits for all State financial aid programs, if the student
24 was unable to complete the semester due to the public health state
25 of emergency declared by Governor Murphy through Executive
26 Order 103. The bill also provides that if a student withdraws or
27 reduces his credits to below full-time, or in the case of a part-time
28 State tuition aid grant (TAG) reduces his credits below half-time,
29 due to the public health state of emergency and the institution has
30 already disbursed the student's State financial aid, the authority will
31 waive the State financial aid amounts that a student would be
32 required to return under existing law.

33 The bill also makes changes to the New Jersey Student Tuition
34 Assistance Reward Scholarship (NJ STARS) Program and the New
35 Jersey Student Tuition Assistance Reward Scholarship II (NJ
36 STARS II) Program. The bill provides that a student enrolled in a
37 county college in the 2019-2020 academic year will remain eligible
38 for the NJ STARS scholarship in the third semester of county
39 college enrollment. In order to remain eligible for the scholarship in
40 the fourth and fifth semesters of county college enrollment, a
41 student who was enrolled in the 2019-2020 academic year must
42 attain a grade point average (GPA) of at least 3.0 by the start of the
43 student's fourth semester of county college enrollment. Under
44 current law, after the first year of enrollment at the county college,
45 the student continues to be eligible for the NJ STARS scholarship if
46 he attains a GPA of at least 3.0 by the start of the student's second
47 year of county college enrollment.

1 The bill provides that a student enrolled in a county college in
2 the 2019-2020 academic year must attain a cumulative GPA of at
3 least 3.0 upon graduation from the county college to be eligible for
4 an NJ STARS II scholarship for the student's third academic year of
5 study. Current law requires a student to attain a cumulative GPA of
6 at least 3.25 upon graduation from the county college to receive the
7 NJ STARS II scholarship for his third academic year of study.

8 In addition, the bill provides that a student enrolled in a four-
9 year institution of higher education in the 2019-2020 academic year
10 will remain eligible for the NJ STARS II scholarship in his third
11 semester of study at the four-year institution. In order to remain
12 eligible for a scholarship in the fourth semester of study, a student
13 who was enrolled in the 2019-2020 academic year must attain a
14 grade point average of at least a 3.25 based on the student's
15 performance during the first three semesters of study at the four-
16 year institution. Current law provides that a student will be eligible
17 to receive an NJSTARS II scholarship for his fourth academic year
18 of study if, based on his performance during the third academic year
19 of study, he attains a GPA of at least 3.25. All eligibility
20 requirements for receipt of the NJ STARS and NJ STARS II
21 scholarships, other than those altered pursuant to the provisions of
22 the bill, will remain in effect.

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27 Provides relief to students receiving State financial aid to address
28 special circumstances due to 2020 public health state of emergency.