

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 204

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 219th LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED NOVEMBER 12, 2020

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman DANIEL R. BENSON

District 14 (Mercer and Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Urges institutions of higher education to temporarily waive SAT or ACT testing requirements for admission due to COVID-19 pandemic.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 **AN ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION** urging institutions of higher education
2 to temporarily waive SAT and ACT testing requirements for
3 college admission.
4

5 **WHEREAS**, Even under normal circumstances, applying to college is a
6 stressful time for high school students. In addition to combining
7 grades, recommendations, extracurricular activities, and personal
8 essays into distinctive applications, high school students often
9 experience high levels of anxiety preparing for and taking the SAT
10 or ACT test, which are often required for admission to an institution
11 of higher education; and

12 **WHEREAS**, The COVID-19 global pandemic has significantly and
13 detrimentally impacted every facet of ordinary life. To limit the
14 spread of COVID-19, it has become imperative for governments,
15 institutions, schools, businesses, organizations, and people
16 throughout New Jersey to implement strict social distancing
17 measures and take other precautions to reduce the public health
18 impact of the disease; and

19 **WHEREAS**, Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the
20 Governor issued a series of executive orders to declare a public
21 health emergency and order the closure of all kindergarten through
22 grade 12 public, private, and parochial schools in the State for the
23 duration of the 2019-2020 school year; and

24 **WHEREAS**, Schools had to adapt their entire curriculum to provide
25 online education and ensure that New Jersey students were able to
26 meet the educational benchmarks necessary to advance to the next
27 grade level or to graduate; and

28 **WHEREAS**, Although the students and teachers of this State worked
29 tirelessly and did a laudable job to complete the 2019-2020 school
30 year through remote instruction, the realities of virtual education
31 limited the academic development of many students, especially
32 those who lacked access to online instruction equipment; and

33 **WHEREAS**, Because of health concerns and the need for social
34 distancing, many opportunities to take the SAT or ACT were
35 cancelled. If a sufficient number of future test dates are not
36 available, or if students are concerned about the adequacy of the
37 safety precautions that will be implemented at the test sites,
38 students should not be pressured to put themselves in a situation
39 that the student feels could endanger his well-being; and

40 **WHEREAS**, In addition to health concerns, the global pandemic has
41 also caused serious economic hardship for millions of Americans.
42 According to the Congressional Budget Office, the national
43 unemployment rate increased from 3.5 percent in February to 13.0
44 percent in May, and according to the federal Bureau of Labor
45 Statistics, 16.3 million Americans were unemployed as of July
46 2020; and

3

WHEREAS, Due to the many concerns associated with the global pandemic, including: the health and well-being of students; the feasibility of taking a standardized admissions test while remaining socially distant; the limitations of virtual instruction; and the discrepancy between the ability of students from higher income families and students whose families are experiencing financial hardship, institutions of higher education should temporarily waive the SAT and ACT testing requirements for admission to the institution; now, therefore,

2. Copies of this resolution, as filed with the Secretary of State, shall be transmitted by the Clerk of the General Assembly to the Secretary of Higher Education, and to the President and the governing board members of each institution of higher education in the State.

45 Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the
46 Governor issued a series of executive orders to declare a public
47 health emergency and order the closure of all kindergarten through
48 grade 12 public, private, and parochial schools in the State for the

1 duration of the 2019-2020 school year. Schools had to adapt their
2 entire curriculum to provide online education and ensure that New
3 Jersey students were able to meet the educational benchmarks
4 necessary to advance to the next grade level or to graduate.
5 Although the students and teachers of this State worked tirelessly
6 and did a laudable job to complete the 2019-2020 school year
7 through remote instruction, the realities of virtual education limited
8 the academic development of many students, especially those who
9 lacked access to online instruction equipment.

10 Because of health concerns and the need for social distancing,
11 many opportunities to take the SAT or ACT were cancelled. If a
12 sufficient number of future test dates are not available, or if
13 students are concerned about the adequacy of the safety precautions
14 that will be taken at the test sites, students should not be pressured
15 to put themselves in a situation that the student feels could endanger
16 his well-being.

17 In addition to health concerns, the global pandemic also caused
18 serious economic hardship for millions of Americans. Given the
19 dire national economic circumstances for many families, this leads
20 to situations in which students from higher income families will
21 have the opportunity to take advantage of expensive prep exams,
22 courses, and test coaches and will have a distinct advantage taking
23 the SAT or ACT test over students from families experiencing
24 financial hardship. All of these factors lead to the conclusion that
25 the SAT and ACT tests must not be used during this period for the
26 purpose of college admission.