

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 960

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: JANUARY 30, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 960 with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill provides that in the event that a student who is enrolled in or planning to enroll in an institution of higher education in the State is considered by the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority to be a dependent of his parent, and the student seeks to apply for any student financial aid programs offered by the federal or State government, the student's parent must provide the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority with a completed financial aid application. The bill requires an institution of higher education to notify the executive director of the Higher Education Student Assistance Authority of all students who report that their parent has refused to provide information to complete a financial aid application. The executive director is also required to send written notification to those parents that failure to submit a completed financial aid application on behalf of a dependent will result in the assessment of a civil penalty.

Under the bill, any person who willfully fails to disclose information required pursuant to the bill's provisions will be subject to a civil penalty of not more than \$500, to be collected in proceedings in accordance with the "Penalty Enforcement Law of 1999," P.L.1999, c.274 (C.2A:58-10 et seq.). The bill further provides that any such civil penalty collected will be conveyed to the authority to transfer to the student's account at the institution of higher education at which the student is enrolled or is planning to enroll. In the event that a student does not enroll, or is no longer enrolled, at an institution of higher education at the time a civil penalty is collected, the civil penalty will be made available to the authority for the purposes of student assistance programs administered by the authority.

The committee amended the bill to clarify that the bill's provision requiring a parent to complete a financial aid application only applies in the event that the student is seeking student financial aid. The committee also amended the bill to provide that, in the event that a student does not enroll, or is no longer enrolled, at an institution of higher education at the time a civil penalty is collected, the civil penalty will be made available to the authority for the purposes of student assistance programs administered by the authority.