

**SENATE, No. 1477**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**  
**219th LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED FEBRUARY 13, 2020

**Sponsored by:**

**Senator NILSA CRUZ-PEREZ**

**District 5 (Camden and Gloucester)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes program to provide free tuition under State Tuition Aid Grant Program to certain students who are accepted to public four-year institutions of higher education and elect to attend county college for first two years.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



1   **AN ACT** concerning the State Tuition Aid Grant Program and  
2       supplementing chapter 71B of Title 18A of the New Jersey  
3       Statutes.

4  
5       **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*  
6       *of New Jersey:*

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8       1.   a.   There is established, within the State Tuition Aid Grant  
9       Program, the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program. The  
10      program shall provide free tuition to eligible students, as defined in  
11      subsection b. of this section, who are accepted for admission to a  
12      four-year public institution of higher education, qualify for a State  
13      tuition aid grant, and elect to complete the first two years of their  
14      undergraduate education at a county college. A grant under the  
15      program shall cover the full cost of tuition for an eligible full-time  
16      undergraduate student for two years of attendance at a county  
17      college to complete an associate degree and two years of attendance  
18      at a four-year public institution of higher education to complete a  
19      baccalaureate degree. The Higher Education Student Assistance  
20      Authority shall administer the program.

21      b.   To be eligible to participate in the program, a student shall:

22          (1) be accepted for admission as a full-time undergraduate  
23          student at a four-year public institution of higher education;

24          (2) be eligible to receive a State tuition aid grant pursuant to  
25          N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq., and apply for all available State and  
26          federal student grants and scholarships for which the student is  
27          eligible;

28          (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's  
29          undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving  
30          the student's county of residence;

31          (4) defer admission at the four-year public institution of higher  
32          education for a period of two years; and

33          (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition  
34          Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

35      c.   Eligible students who wish to participate in the program  
36      shall submit an application to the Higher Education Student  
37      Assistance Authority, on a form and in a manner prescribed by the  
38      authority.

39      d.   (1) A four-year public institution of higher education shall  
40      grant a deferment for two years to a student who has been accepted  
41      for admission to the institution and who participates in the Two to  
42      Four Tuition Free Students Program established pursuant to this  
43      section.

44          (2) All academic credits earned at a county college in  
45          completing an associate degree by a student who participates in the  
46          program shall be fully transferable and credited as the first two  
47          years of a baccalaureate degree program at the four-year public  
48          institution of higher education to which the student is accepted.

1 e. In the event that a student who participates in the Two to  
2 Four Tuition Free Students Program takes longer than two years at a  
3 county college to complete an associate degree or longer than two  
4 years at a four-year public institution of higher education to  
5 complete a baccalaureate degree, funding for the additional time  
6 period shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the  
7 Tuition Aid Grant Program pursuant to N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq.

8  
9 2. a. A four-year independent institution of higher education  
10 may elect to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students  
11 Program. In the case of a participating four-year independent  
12 institution of higher education, a grant under the program shall  
13 cover the full cost of tuition for an eligible full-time undergraduate  
14 student for two years of attendance at a county college to complete  
15 an associate degree. For two years of subsequent attendance at the  
16 independent institution of higher education to complete a  
17 baccalaureate degree, the grant amount shall equal the average cost  
18 of tuition at the four-year public institutions of higher education in  
19 each year of attendance. If the cost of tuition at the independent  
20 institution of higher education exceeds the amount of the grant, the  
21 independent institution of higher education may charge the student  
22 for the additional cost.

23 b. To be eligible to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free  
24 Students Program at a four-year independent institution of higher  
25 education, a student shall:

26 (1) be accepted for admission as a full-time undergraduate  
27 student at a four-year independent institution of higher education  
28 that has elected to participate in the Two to Four Tuition Free  
29 Students Program;

30 (2) be eligible to receive a State tuition aid grant pursuant to  
31 N.J.S.18A:71B-18 et seq., and apply for all available State and  
32 federal student grants and scholarships for which the student is  
33 eligible;

34 (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's  
35 undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving  
36 the student's county of residence;

37 (4) defer admission at the four-year independent institution of  
38 higher education for a period of two years; and

39 (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition  
40 Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

41 c. A four-year independent institution of higher education that  
42 participates in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program shall  
43 grant a deferment for two years to a student who has been accepted  
44 for admission to the institution and who participates in the Two to  
45 Four Tuition Free Students Program. The institution shall also  
46 agree to fully transfer and accept all academic credits earned by the  
47 student at a county college in completing an associate degree.

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1       (3) elect to complete the first two years of the student's  
2 undergraduate education at the New Jersey county college serving  
3 the student's county of residence;

4       (4) defer admission at the four-year public institution of higher  
5 education for a period of two years; and

6       (5) have a New Jersey Eligibility Index under the State Tuition  
7 Aid Grant Program that does not exceed 2499.

8       The bill requires a four-year public institution of higher  
9 education to grant a deferment for two years to a student who has  
10 been accepted for admission to the institution and who participates  
11 in the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program. All academic  
12 credits earned at the county college by a program participant will be  
13 fully transferrable and credited as the first two years of a  
14 baccalaureate degree program at the four-year institution.

15       In addition, the bill allows independent institutions of higher  
16 education to elect to participate in the program. In the case of an  
17 eligible student who is accepted to a participating independent  
18 institution, the grant will cover the full cost of tuition for two years  
19 at a county college, and for the two subsequent years the grant  
20 amount will equal the average cost of attendance at the four-year  
21 public institutions of higher education in each year of attendance.  
22 The independent institution may charge the student for the cost of  
23 tuition in excess of the grant amount.

24       The bill provides that any monies the State saves under the  
25 Tuition Aid Grant Program as a result of students participating in  
26 the Two to Four Tuition Free Students Program will be reinvested  
27 in the Tuition Aid Grant Program in order to expand the population  
28 of students who are eligible to participate in the Two to Four  
29 Tuition Free Students Program. The bill also requires the Higher  
30 Education Student Assistance Authority to submit a report annually  
31 to the Governor and the Legislature on the program, which will  
32 include the number of students participating in the program, the  
33 graduation rate of participants, information on student outcomes,  
34 and the amount of any cost savings realized by the State as a result  
35 of students participating in the program.