

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 82

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: DECEMBER 10, 2020

The Senate Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Resolution No. 82.

This resolution urges institutions of higher education to temporarily waive the SAT or ACT testing requirement for admission to the institution due to the many academic, social, and health-related difficulties associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Governor issued a series of executive orders to declare a public health emergency and order the closure of all kindergarten through grade 12 public, private, and parochial schools in the State for the duration of the 2019-2020 school year. Schools had to adapt their entire curriculum to provide online education and ensure that New Jersey students were able to meet the educational benchmarks necessary to advance to the next grade level or to graduate. Although the students and teachers of this State worked tirelessly and did a laudable job to complete the 2019-2020 school year through remote instruction, the realities of virtual education limited the academic development of many students, especially those who lacked access to online instruction equipment.

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

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