

HB 1267 -- VIRTUAL EDUCATION

SPONSOR: Lichtenegger

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education by a vote of 10 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Rules- Administrative Oversight Committee by a vote of 12 to 1.

This bill adds approved virtual institutions to the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program, as described within the bill.

An approved virtual institution must be organized as a nonprofit institution; accredited by a regional accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; have established and continuously maintained a physical campus or location of operation in Missouri; maintain at least 25 full-time Missouri employees, at least one-half of which must be faculty or administrators engaged in Missouri operations; enroll at least 1000 Missouri residents as degree or certificate seeking students; be recognized as a qualifying institution by gubernatorial executive order, unless such order is rescinded; utilize an exclusively competency-based education model; and maintain a governing body or advisory board based in Missouri with oversight of Missouri operations.

This bill is the same as HCS HB 411 (2017).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill expands eligibility for financial assistance under the program to students seeking degrees from virtual institutions.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Lichtenegger; Leroy Wade, Missouri Department of Higher Education; Rebecca Lopanec, WGU - Missouri; and Matthew West.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.