

HCS HB 733 -- WORKFORCE DIPLOMA PROGRAM

SPONSOR: Patterson

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass with HCS" by the Standing Committee on Workforce Development by a vote of 11 to 2. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules- Legislative Oversight by a vote of 9 to 0.

The following is a summary of the House Committee Substitute for HB 733.

This bill establishes the "Workforce Diploma Program". Before August 16, 2022, and annually thereafter, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) must submit a request for interested program providers for the program. An approved program provider must meet a list of qualifications, including but not limited to being an accredited high school diploma-granting entity and having a minimum of two years experience providing adult dropout recovery services.

Every year, DESE must announce the approved programs before October 16th. The approved program providers shall begin enrolling students starting before November 15th of each year. DESE shall pay, upon appropriation, the approved program providers for the specified milestones provided to each student: \$250 for the completion of each half unit of high school credit, \$250 for attaining an employability skills certification, \$250 for attaining an industry-recognized credential requiring no more than 50 hours of training, \$500 for attaining an industry-recognized credential requiring at least 51 but no more than 100 hours of training, \$750 for attaining an industry-recognized credential requiring more than 100 hours of training, and \$1,000 for attaining an accredited high school diploma.

No approved program provider shall receive funding if that provider receives federal or state funding or private tuition for the student. DESE must provide a written update to approved program providers by the last calendar day of each month. Providers may not charge any type of student fees or tuition unless a student is earning hours in addition to the maximum limit covered by state expenditures.

Before July 16th of each year, each provider must report certain metrics, specified in this section, to DESE. The bill requires each approved provider to conduct a survey of each individual who graduated from the approved program and submit the results to DESE before September 16th of each year beginning the year after the individual graduates and the next four consecutive years.

The survey must include the individual's employment status, hourly wages, access to employer-sponsored health care, and any postsecondary enrollment the individual has completed including a postsecondary certificate or degree program.

Upon the end of the second fiscal year of the program, DESE must review the metrics for each program provider and determine whether each provider is meeting the minimum performance standards. If a program provider does not meet the minimum standards for two consecutive years, that provider will be removed from the approved provider list.

This bill also creates a "Workforce Diploma Program Fund".

This bill is similar to HCS HB 2038 (2020).

The following is a summary of the public testimony from the committee hearing. The testimony was based on the introduced version of the bill.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is an excellent opportunity to incentivize completion of high school diplomas especially given increased drop out rates because of the pandemic. High school diplomas are correlated with increased earning potential and employment options. Vendors are paid only after credits are earned. Currently, almost one-half million Missouri residents lack a high school diploma.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Patterson; Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Associated Industries of Missouri; and the Graduation Alliance.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill provided written testimony.

Testifying against the bill was Arnie Dienoff.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill provided written testimony.

Testifying on the bill was Brittany Whitley, Missouri Science & Technology (Most) Policy Initiative.

Written testimony has been submitted for this bill. The full written testimony can be found under Testimony on the bill page on the House website.