

HB 168 -- STEM GRANT

SPONSOR: Brown (149)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Higher Education and Workforce Development by a vote of 11 to 0. Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative by a vote of 9 to 0.

Subject to appropriation, this bill directs the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development (DHEWD) to make available a STEM grant for up to \$1500 a semester with a maximum grant of \$6000 to eligible recipients. Eligibility for a STEM grant is outlined in the bill, and includes financial considerations similar to the Missouri Access Program under Sections 173.1101 to 173.1107, RSMo.

Recipients must also be working toward a STEM degree, which includes science, technology, engineering, or mathematics fields as specified in the bill.

Specific requirements for STEM grant renewal are also provided and include satisfactory academic progress, five or less semesters at a two-year institution, or no more than 10 semesters at an approved four-year institution, or a combination of the two.

The bill sunsets six years after the effective date.

This bill is similar to HB 2313 (2024), HB 515 (2023), and HB 2763 (2022).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that there are job openings in STEM related fields that cannot be filled and that more college graduates are needed. Companies are leaving the State due to a lack of qualified workers. Missouri is missing the necessary investment to be competitive in the STEM fields and this is a bill that would help.

Testifying in person for the bill were Representative Brown; Associated Students of the University of Missouri; American Council of Engineering Companies of Missouri; and Missouri Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

OPPOSERS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.

OTHERS: Others testifying on the bill say the scholarship would be provided directly to the student and they could decide what institution of higher education they used it for. This might be a

way to allow for private institutions to take advantage of the program.

Testifying in person on the bill was Independent Colleges and Universities of Missouri.

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