

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL**No. 2338** Session of
2015

INTRODUCED BY GABLER, BENNINGHOFF, SAYLOR, SANKEY, BOBACK,
CAUSER, COOK-ARTIS, CUTLER, DAY, DRISCOLL, DUSH, ELLIS, FEE,
GILLESPIE, GODSHALL, GOODMAN, GROVE, HARHART, HARPER, HELM,
PHILLIPS-HILL, KNOWLES, LONGIETTI, MAJOR, MCGINNIS, MENTZER,
B. MILLER, MILNE, NESBIT, O'NEILL, OBERLANDER, RAPP, REGAN,
SCHEMEL, SCHLOSSBERG, SIMMONS, SNYDER, STURLA, TAYLOR,
TOBASH, TOPPER, TURZAI, WARD, WENTLING, ZIMMERMAN, KLUNK,
JOZWIAK, MAHONEY, GINGRICH, ROEBUCK, ORTITAY, PETRI, CONKLIN
AND BARBIN, SEPTEMBER 14, 2016

AS AMENDED ON SECOND CONSIDERATION, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SEPTEMBER 28, 2016

AN ACT

1 Providing for student protection during the transition of a
2 postsecondary education institution to new accreditation.

3 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
4 hereby enacts as follows:

5 Section 1. Short title.

6 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Student
7 Protection Act.

8 Section 2. Student protections.

9 (a) General rule.--If the United States Department of
10 Education discontinues its recognition of a national accrediting
11 agency, the Commonwealth shall take all actions necessary to
12 ensure the following with respect to each student who attends
13 any of the Pennsylvania postsecondary education institutions
14 that are currently accredited by the national accrediting agency

1 that loses Federal recognition:

2 (1) Such student will remain eligible for all State
3 financial assistance through the Pennsylvania Higher
4 Education Assistance Agency and any other State agency
5 through which such student may be eligible for assistance,
6 provided the student meets all other qualifications for the
7 financial assistance. WHEN ADVANCING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE <--
8 FUNDS DURING A SCHOOL'S TRANSITION TO NEW ACCREDITATION, THE
9 PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY MAY FOLLOW
10 THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION'S ISSUANCE OF
11 FEDERAL TITLE IV FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, ALONG WITH ANY OTHER
12 TERMS AND CONDITIONS APPLIED DURING THIS TRANSITION.

13 (2) Such student will remain eligible for State
14 licensure, certification or any other professional credential
15 for which the student has trained, provided the student meets
16 all other qualifications and passes any exams or assessments
17 necessary for such licensure, certification or credential.

18 (b) Transition of institutions to new accreditors.--The
19 Pennsylvania postsecondary education institutions that are
20 accredited by the national accrediting agency that loses Federal
21 recognition shall be provided a transition period of no less
22 than 18 months to receive new accreditation by another
23 accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of
24 Education. The student protections provided in subsection (a)
25 shall remain in effect for students attending these institutions
26 throughout this transition period. If a Pennsylvania
27 postsecondary education institution has not received new
28 accreditation by the end of this 18-month transition period, the
29 agencies of the Commonwealth may continue the student
30 protections provided in subsection (a) until new accreditation

1 is received if the agency deems the extension of the protections
2 to be in the best interest of the students attending the
3 institution.

4 (C) STUDENT DISCLOSURES.--DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD TO <--
5 NEW ACCREDITATION, THE INSTITUTION SHALL PROVIDE A DISCLOSURE TO
6 THE RECIPIENTS OF ANY STATE AID PROVIDED FOR IN SUBSECTION (A)
7 (1). THIS DISCLOSURE SHALL PROVIDE THE STATUS OF THE
8 INSTITUTION'S APPLICATION FOR NEW ACCREDITATION. IT MAY ALSO
9 CONTAIN OTHER INFORMATION IMPORTANT TO STUDENTS.

10 SECTION 3. NOTICE.

11 THE PENNSYLVANIA HIGHER EDUCATION ASSISTANCE AGENCY SHALL
12 PUBLISH GUIDANCE ON ITS PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INTERNET WEBSITE FOR
13 IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS ACT.

14 Section ~~3~~ 4. Expiration. <--

15 This act shall expire December 31, 2018.

16 Section ~~4~~ 5. Effective date. <--

17 This act shall take effect immediately.