Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas *As Engrossed: H3/18/21 S4/5/21*
93rd General Assembly **A Bill**
Regular Session, 2021 HOUSE BILL 1700

By: Representative Bentley
By: Senator G. Stubblefield

For An Act To Be Entitled

AN ACT TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES BY PROVIDING STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND GUIDANCE COUNSELORS WITH RELIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COST OF COLLEGE AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN ARKANSAS; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Subtitle

TO IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES BY PROVIDING STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND GUIDANCE COUNSELORS WITH RELIABLE INFORMATION REGARDING THE COST OF COLLEGE AND JOB OPPORTUNITIES IN ARKANSAS.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

SECTION 1. DO NOT CODIFY. Legislative findings.

The General Assembly finds that:

(1) A fundamental goal of Arkansas's secondary and higher education system is not only to educate and enrich young people, but also to help young people establish a solid foundation for good-paying work;

(2) The cost of college continues to increase for young individuals across the country, and student debt has become the second-largest financial debt vehicle in the United States;

(3) The General Assembly is proud of its institutions of higher education and believes they can compete with any in the nation, but their cost to enrollees must be as transparent as possible;

(4) Middle and high school students deserve as much access as possible to information regarding the costs of college and future job opportunities in the state;

(5) Arkansas employers need workers with varied skills and education levels, and future Arkansas workers should have a clear idea of what steps are required to pursue the career of their choice; and

(6) The constantly changing nature of educational opportunities and the job market requires up-to-date information for anyone seeking a job or an education in Arkansas to properly navigate the marketplace.

SECTION 2. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 60, is amended to add an additional subchapter to read as follows:

Subchapter 12 — Information Regarding the Cost of College and Job Opportunities

6-60-1201. Definition.

As used in this subchapter, "college" means a state-supported two-year or four-year institution of higher education.

6-60-1202. Information collected by *Division of Higher Education*.

(a) The Division of Higher Education shall collect and compile the following information without limitation on an annual basis:

(1) The most in-demand jobs in the state, including without limitation the *approximate starting salaries* and education levels required for those jobs;

(2) The *approximate average cost* for all colleges in the state;

(3) The average monthly *federal student loan* payment for individuals who attend or who have graduated from all colleges in the state;

(4) The average three-year *federal student loan* default rate for all colleges in the state;

(5) The average total *federal student loan* debt for graduates of in-state colleges for four-year degrees and graduate programs;

(6) The average graduation rate for all colleges in the state;

(7) The completion rates for:

(A) Apprenticeship programs;

(B) High school credential programs; and

(C) Career and technical education programs;

(8) The share of college graduates working in an occupation that does not require a college degree for each major;

(9) The *approximate average* starting salary for individuals graduating from a college;

(10) The *approximate average* starting salary for individuals who have completed:

(A) An apprenticeship program;

(B) A high school credential program; or

(C) A career and technical education program; and

(11) The approximate average starting salary for individuals graduating from a two-year college in the state.

(b) The division shall work with the following entities without limitation to collect and compile the information required under subsection (a) of this section:

(1) The Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce;

(2) The Division of Career and Technical Education;

(3) The Division of Elementary and Secondary Education;

(4) The Division of Information Systems; and

(5) The Department of Commerce.

(c)(1) The information collected and compiled under subsection (a) of this section shall utilize current state reports compiled into a single, easily understandable digest.

(2) The state reports to be utilized shall include without limitation the:

(A) Higher Education Consumer Guide;

(B) Economic Securities Report;

(C) Ready for Life Initiative report and State Longitudinal Data System;

(D) College Scorecard; and

(E) Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System Data Feedback reports of the National Center for Education Statistics.

6-60-1203. Information published to public by Division of Higher Education.

(a) The Division of Higher Education shall partner with the Ready for

Life Initiative to include information required under § 6-60-1202 in the Arkansas Ready for Life searchable database, which shall include without limitation:

(1) *Approximate average* annual cost;

(2) *Average graduation* rate;

(3) *Average salary* after attending;

(4) Highest paying salaries for top five (5) majors;

(5) Full-time enrollment *headcount*;

(6) Race and ethnicity information of enrollees in each program;

(7) Percentage of students in student loan default;

(8) Typical total federal student loan debt after graduation;

(9) Percentage of students receiving federal student loans;

(10) Typical monthly federal student loan payment;

(11) The average one-year retention rate of students majoring in the top five (5) majors;

(12) Average success rates, which measure the percentage of students who have graduated, transferred, or are still enrolled in colleges in this state.

(b)(1) The database established under subsection (a) of this section shall provide individuals with the ability to select a specific major or program at a specific college.

(2) Upon selecting a specific major or program at a specific college while using the database, the following overview shall be provided, to be filled in with information required under subsection (a) of this section as it applies to the specific major or program at the specific college that the individual selected:

"For every 100 students starting in {insert major} *in this state, {insert number} will graduate in 6 years; of those,* {insert number} will get a job with an average starting salary of {insert salary} within 6 months of graduation. The average debt for the graduates will be {insert debt}. The total cost on average for this degree is {insert total amount paid}. Of the {insert number} who don't graduate, they will accumulate an average debt of {insert debt}."

6-60-1204. Information published and distributed to middle and high school students by Department of Education.

The Department of Education shall publish and distribute to middle and high school students in the State of Arkansas on an annual basis a comparison, using the information collected under § 6-60-1202, that contains the following information without limitation:

(1) The top fifty (50) majors for four-year degrees by salaries after graduating;

(2) The top twenty (20) career and technical education and certificate programs by salaries after graduating or receiving a certificate of *completion; and*

(3) The top twenty-five (25) most in-demand jobs in the state and their corresponding starting salaries and education *requirements.*

6-60-1205. Effective date.

The requirements of this subchapter shall be effective no later than *July* 1, 2022.

/s/Bentley