

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

State of Arkansas  
93rd General Assembly  
Regular Session, 2021

As Engrossed: H4/5/21  
**A Bill**

HOUSE BILL 1854

By: Representatives M. Gray, Barker, M. Davis, Murdock, McNair, M. Hodges, Dotson, Warren, Vaught,  
Hollowell

By: Senator D. Wallace

### **For An Act To Be Entitled**

AN ACT TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAM FOR  
STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
EDUCATION; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES.

### **Subtitle**

*TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE  
PROGRAM FOR STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR  
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND TO  
DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.*

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

SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 51, Subchapter 1, is amended to add an additional section to read as follows:

6-51-106. Baccalaureate Degree Program – Two-year institutions of higher education.

(a) There is created, by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year, within the Division of Higher Education a program that shall establish and implement a Baccalaureate Degree Program for state-supported two-year institutions of higher education to offer education and training that leads to applied baccalaureate degrees and workforce baccalaureate degrees in high-demand career fields that shall include without limitation Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees.

(b) The division shall work with the following entities without



limitation to establish and implement the program under subsection (a) of this section:

(1) The Department of Health;  
(2) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing; and  
(3) Any other individual or entity involved in applied or workforce education.

(c) The division shall develop an application process and procedure by which each state-supported two-year institution of higher education may apply to participate in the program under this section.

(d) Offering education or training that leads to baccalaureate degrees under this section does not convert a state-supported two-year institution of higher education to a four-year institution of higher education as long as the total number of baccalaureate degrees offered under this section accounts for less than ten percent (10%) of the degrees or certificates awarded by the state-supported two-year institution of higher education.

SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the ongoing public health emergency has increased the strain on the state's public health system and resources; that the shortage of nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree has been emphasized by the ongoing public health emergency; that there are additional high-demand career fields that have been highlighted by the ongoing public health emergency; and that this act is immediately necessary in order to create accelerated, streamlined, and more affordable opportunities by which those choosing health care, nursing, and other high-demand career fields as their vocation may obtain advanced degrees to enter the high-need workforce earlier and at less cost. Therefore, an emergency is declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective on:

(1) The date of its approval by the Governor;  
(2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor, the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the bill; or  
(3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.

*/s/M. Gray*