

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2023

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SENATE BILL DRS35158-MTa-133

Short Title: Employment and Independence Act. (Public)

Sponsors: Senators Lee, Krawiec, and Grafstein (Primary Sponsors).

Referred to:

1 A BILL TO BE ENTITLED
2 AN ACT TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS TO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGES SYSTEM
3 OFFICE FOR A VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PILOT PROGRAM.

4 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

5 **SECTION 1.(a)** Program; Purpose. – The State Board of Community Colleges shall
6 establish the Vocational Rehabilitation Pilot Program (Program) for the 2023-2024 to 2025-2026
7 academic years. The purpose of the Program is to provide support services to community college
8 students with intellectual and developmental disabilities to help the students reach their goals for
9 employment and independence without duplicating the existing vocational support network.

10 **SECTION 1.(b)** Use of Funds; Selection. – Community colleges may apply to the
11 State Board of Community Colleges to participate in the Program. The State Board, in
12 consultation with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services of the Department of Health
13 and Human Services (DVR), shall select community colleges to participate in the Program. As
14 part of the Program, the Community Colleges System Office shall contract with DVR to place
15 student counselors at selected community colleges in the State. Funds provided for this purpose
16 may be used to meet any applicable federal matching requirements for student counselors and
17 for costs related to administration of the Program.

18 **SECTION 1.(c)** Report. – No later than March 15, 2024, and each year thereafter in
19 which funds are expended during the Program, the State Board of Community Colleges, in
20 consultation with DVR, shall report on the impact of the Program on participants, including at
21 least the following information:

- 22 (1) The mental health and well-being of participants.
23 (2) Job placements of participants.

24 **SECTION 2.** Appropriation. – There is appropriated from the General Fund to the
25 Community Colleges System Office the sum of seven hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$750,000)
26 in nonrecurring funds for the 2023-2024 fiscal year to implement the Vocational Rehabilitation
27 Pilot Program established pursuant to Section 1 of this act. These funds shall not revert at the end
28 of the 2023-2024 fiscal year but shall remain available until the end of the 2025-2026 fiscal year.

29 **SECTION 3.** Effective Date. – This act becomes effective July 1, 2023.



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