

# ASSEMBLY HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

## STATEMENT TO

[First Reprint]

## SENATE, No. 659

with committee amendments

# STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: OCTOBER 13, 2022

The Assembly Higher Education Committee reports favorably Senate Bill No. 659 (1R), with committee amendments.

As amended, this bill requires various State entities to promote manufacturing career pathways for students and provides assistance to the manufacturing industry.

Under the bill, the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, in consultation with the Secretary of Higher Education, Commissioner of Education, the New Jersey Council of County Colleges, the New Jersey Council of County Vocational Schools, and representatives of the business community, will promote and support the implementation of the manufacturing career pathway offered through the New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative operated by the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce Development to provide students interested in pursuing a career in manufacturing with the instruction and skills necessary to gain employment in the manufacturing or advanced manufacturing sectors. The manufacturing career pathway will include traditional and advanced manufacturing processes and methods of production including, but not limited to, the machinery, technology, tools, and equipment used in a wide range of manufacturing industries.

The bill establishes a “Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program,” to be administered by a three-person commission which will include the Secretary of Higher Education, a representative of the New Jersey Manufacturing Extension Program, and a representative of the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development. The commission will annually award \$10 million to New Jersey institutions of higher education, proprietary institutions, and county vocational school districts for the purpose of establishing or expanding programs in the manufacturing fields, and marketing and promoting current programs in the manufacturing fields.

Under the bill, the Secretary of State, in consultation with the Commissioner of Labor and Workforce Development, will designate an existing or newly hired employee of the Business Action Center in the Department of State to act as a liaison between the State and manufacturing businesses located in this State. The duties of the liaison will be to assist manufacturing businesses by:

- advertising manufacturing businesses' products or services nationally and internationally through the Business Action Center;
- establishing a business referral service where manufacturing businesses may be referred to other State, federal, or private business resource organizations; and
- identifying and promoting opportunities throughout the State for postsecondary pathway programs to actively reskill and upskill the current workforce to better meet the needs of manufacturing fields.

The Secretary of State is to work with State departments, agencies, boards, commissions, and authorities to direct resources, create incentives, and provide technological, financial, and workforce development opportunities for manufacturing businesses.

The bill also establishes in the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission, the New Jersey Advanced Manufacturing Council. The council will consist of 11 members who are individuals with experience in the fields of labor, education, or workforce development or training. The bill directs the council to:

- convene and enable industry-led, private-public partnerships focused on engaging New Jersey institutions of higher education in manufacturing innovation;
- design and implement an advanced manufacturing initiative to facilitate collaboration and information sharing across State departments and agencies;
- assist private companies to enhance technological transfer in New Jersey manufacturing industries to help companies overcome technical obstacles to scaling up production of new technologies; and
- submit an annual report to the Governor, to the Legislature, and to the State Employment and Training Commission, of its assessments and recommendations to enhance State policy related to the advanced manufacturing industry in New Jersey.

As reported by the committee, this bill is identical to the Assembly Bill No. 2014(1R), which was also amended and reported by the committee on this same date.

#### COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amended the bill to permit, rather than require, a grant application from a county college or county vocational school district to the "Higher Education Manufacturing Grant Program" to include a description of how the applicant would integrate their program into existing workforce development programs, including the manufacturing program within the New Jersey Pathways to Career Opportunities Initiative operated by the New Jersey Community College Consortium for Workforce and Economic Development.