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SENATE BILL NO. 575

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 13, 2016

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 16 of Title 23 an article numbered 2.2, consisting of sections numbered 23-220.6, 23-220.7, and 23-220.8, relating to comprehensive community colleges; noncredit workforce credentials; Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Act.*

Patrons—Ruff and Suetterlein

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 16 of Title 23 an article numbered 2.2, consisting of sections numbered 23-220.6, 23-220.7, and 23-220.8, as follows:

*Article 2.2.**Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Act.***§ 23-220.6. Definitions.**

As used in this article, unless the context requires a different meaning:

"Competency-based" means awarded on the basis of demonstrated knowledge and skills rather than completion of instructional hours or participation in an instructional course or program.

"Incentive" means a payment to a comprehensive community college to reward and stimulate increased levels of noncredit workforce credential attainment for in-demand and high-demand occupations.

"Industry-recognized" means demonstrating competency or proficiency in the technical and occupational skills identified as necessary for performing functions of an occupation based on standards developed or endorsed by employers and industry organizations.

"Noncredit workforce credential" means a competency-based, industry-recognized, portable, and third-party-validated certification or occupational license.

"Portable" means recognized by multiple employers and educational institutions and, where appropriate, across geographic areas.

"Program" means the Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Program.

"Student" means a comprehensive community college student who is a resident of the Commonwealth.

"System" means the Virginia Community College System.

"Third-party-validated" means having an external process in place for determining validity and relevance in the workplace and for continuous alignment of demonstrated knowledge and skills with industry workforce needs.

§ 23-220.7. Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Program established; purpose.

The Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Program is established within the System for the purpose of (i) creating and sustaining a demand-driven supply of credentialed workers for high-demand and in-demand occupations in the Commonwealth by addressing and closing the gap between the skills needed by the technicians, technologists, and trade-level workers in the Commonwealth and the skills of the available workforce in the Commonwealth; (ii) expanding the affordability of workforce training and credentialing; and (iii) increasing the interest of current and future Virginia workers in technician, technologist, and trade-level positions to fill the available and emerging jobs in the Commonwealth that require less than a bachelor's degree but more than a high school diploma in order to address the Commonwealth's goal of increasing to more than 460,000 the number of workforce credentials earned by Virginians by 2030.

§ 23-220.8. Virginia Community College System; Virginia Pathway to the Middle Class: Noncredit Workforce Credentials Program.

A. The System shall administer the Program. In administering the Program, the System shall:

1. Approve a plan and funding formula to support capacity building for and development and expansion of noncredit workforce credentials programs at comprehensive community colleges that prepare students for in-demand noncredit workforce credentials that are aligned with the knowledge and skill sets that are required for the available occupations in each region;

2. Approve a plan for providing financial incentives to comprehensive community colleges that

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59 *demonstrate exceptional performance or improvement in the development and expansion of noncredit*
60 *workforce credentials programs that prepare students for in-demand noncredit workforce credentials that*
61 *are aligned with the knowledge and skill sets that are required for the available occupations in each*
62 *region, as validated and reported by the System;*

63 *3. No later than January 1 of each year, submit a report to the General Assembly and the Virginia*
64 *Board of Workforce Development with data from the previous fiscal year on noncredit workforce*
65 *credentials attainment by students at comprehensive community colleges that includes:*

66 *a. A list of the noncredit workforce credentials offered, by name, comprehensive community college,*
67 *and certification entity;*

68 *b. The number of students who enrolled in noncredit workforce credentials programs at*
69 *comprehensive community colleges, by comprehensive community college and in the System as a whole;*

70 *c. The number of students who completed noncredit workforce credentials programs at*
71 *comprehensive community colleges, by comprehensive community college and in the System as a whole;*

72 *d. The number of students who attained noncredit workforce credentials after completing noncredit*
73 *workforce credentials programs at comprehensive community colleges, by credential name, relevant*
74 *industry sector, and comprehensive community college and in the System as a whole; and*

75 *e. The average cost per noncredit workforce credential attained, by credential name, relevant*
76 *industry sector, and comprehensive community college.*

77 *Such report shall be submitted to the General Assembly as a report document as provided in the*
78 *procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents*
79 *and reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website; and*

80 *4. Approve a plan and timeline for assessing the impact of a pilot set of noncredit workforce*
81 *credentials on short-term and long-term job attainment and wages.*

82 **2. That the Virginia Community College System shall approve (i) a plan and funding formula to**
83 **support capacity building for and development and expansion of noncredit workforce credentials**
84 **programs at comprehensive community colleges pursuant to this act no later than October 31,**
85 **2016 and (ii) each other plan and timeline as required by this act no later than January 1, 2017.**