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**HOUSE BILL NO. 961**

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled January 12, 2016

A *BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 23-7.4:8, relating to alternative tuition or fee structures.*

Patrons—Rush, Austin, Bell, John J., Boysko, Head, Helsel, Herring, Kory, LaRock and Price

Referred to Committee on Education

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding a section numbered 23-7.4:8 as follows:**

**§ 23-7.4:8. Alternative tuition or fee structures.**

A. Any public institution of higher education may offer alternative tuition or fee structures to students.

B. In order to receive the benefits set forth in subsection C, a public institution of higher education shall, with the approval of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (Council), offer alternative tuition or fee structures, including discounted tuition, flat tuition rates, discounted student fees, or student fee and student services flexibility, to any first-time, incoming freshman undergraduate student who (i) has established domicile, as that term is defined in § 23-7.4, in the Commonwealth and (ii) enrolls full time with the intent to earn a degree in a program that leads to employment in a high-demand field in the region, according to guidelines established by the Council. Such an alternative tuition or fee structure may be renewed each year if the recipient maintains continuous full-time enrollment. If a recipient fails to maintain continuous full-time enrollment, subsequently enrolls in a noneligible degree program, or fails to complete the eligible degree program within four years, the institution shall convert the financial benefit received by the student pursuant to this subsection to a financial obligation payable by the student to the institution on terms established by the institution and approved by the Council.

C. Each student who receives the benefits of an alternative tuition or fee structure pursuant to subsection B shall count one and a half times for the purpose of (i) targeted economic and innovation incentives pursuant to subdivision A 3 of § 23-38.87:16, (ii) the base adequacy funding guidelines adopted and periodically updated by the Joint Subcommittee Studying Higher Education Funding Policies, or (iii) biennial assessments of institutional performance as set forth in Part 4 of the general appropriation act and § 23-9.6:1.01.

INTRODUCED

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