

**AGENDA ITEM 4.**

**STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

**Submitted for:** Information

**Summary:** This item highlights noteworthy bills and resolutions that have changed in status since the Commission's July meeting, in addition to significant bills for which action is still pending.

**Action requested:** None

## ILLINOIS STUDENT ASSISTANCE COMMISSION

### STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

This item highlights noteworthy legislation that has changed in status since the Commission's July meeting, in addition to significant bills for which action is still pending. Bill descriptions and statuses (in *italics*) are current as of August 28, 2017.

#### PUBLIC ACTS

##### ISAC-Administered Grant Programs

- **Licensed teachers' access to Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarships**

- **SB 1739 (Lightford/Ford) - P.A. 100-0235**

This ISAC initiative clarifies that an individual who is already licensed to teach may participate in the existing Minority Teachers of Illinois scholarship program while pursuing an additional teaching endorsement or a master's degree in an academic field in which he or she is teaching or plans to teach (rather than limiting the program to undergraduate students). This proposal aligns with a 2016 recommendation from the P-20 Council's Teacher Leadership and Effectiveness Committee to promote access to dual credit. The committee reported that, currently, there are a number of school districts that are unable to offer dual credit coursework because their teachers lack the advanced degrees required to offer courses leading to college credit.

- **Police job training program & scholarship**

- **HB 243 (Flowers/Van Pelt) – P.A. 100-331**

HB 243 allows high schools in counties with populations of 175,000 or more to develop police job training programs in conjunction with local law enforcement, and it creates a college scholarship program that would be administered by ISAC and available subject to appropriation to students who "successfully complete" (a term that is not defined by the Act) the high school program. The Act provides little detail regarding the scholarship program, such as the size of the award or exactly how students would qualify. A special fund will be created in the State treasury to receive gifts and donations for both the job training and scholarship components of the program. The Act does not describe how dollars in that fund would be distributed between the two program components or among their potential recipients.

##### Innovative Credit-Granting Policies

- **Creates the Credit for Prior Learning Act**

- **HB 2404 (Willis/Rose) - P.A. 100-0261**

This new Act requires the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) and Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) to adopt rules that allow public institutions to award credit for prior learning for a specific course or courses. Each public university and community college will be required to submit its policies and procedures regarding credit for prior learning to the IBHE or ICCB.

- **Creates the Educational Credit for Military Experience Act**

- **HB 3701 (Greenwood/Clayborne) - P.A. 100-0195**

Under this new Act, each institution of higher education must adopt a policy by June 1, 2018, to award academic credit for military training. Institutions of higher education must submit their policies for awarding this credit to IBHE and ICCB for review before June 30, 2018, and before June 30 of every other year thereafter. The Act also requires the IBHE to collect data on students who are veterans or have military service to assess their enrollment and completion outcomes.

### **Procurement Reform**

- **Exempts Prepaid Tuition Trust Fund from the Procurement Code**

- **SB 8 (Harmon/Riley) - P.A. 100-0043**

This bipartisan, omnibus bill to reform the state's procurement process includes language that ISAC requested. Effective August 9, 2017, the Act exempts from the state's Procurement Code any purchases made from the private moneys contained in the Prepaid Tuition Trust Fund.

### **BILLS AND RESOLUTIONS VETOED BY THE GOVERNOR**

#### **Student Loan Servicing**

- **Creates the Student Loan Servicing Rights Act**

- **SB 1351 (Biss/Guzzardi) – Governor Vetoed**

This initiative of the Illinois Attorney General would create the Student Loan Servicing Rights Act, consisting of four major components: a Student Loan Bill of Rights, a new Student Loan Ombudsman within the Attorney General's office, a requirement that the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) license loan servicers, and a provision making violations of the Act unlawful practices under the Consumer Fraud and Deceptive Business Practices Act. With Senate Amendment #3, ISAC and its agents are exempt, along with other state guaranty agencies.

In his veto message, the Governor called the intent of the measure "laudable" and referred to recent decisions by the U.S. Department of Education that have caused concern. However, he also argued that this specific bill "would add confusion to the already complex student loan process" and would encroach on federal responsibilities. The Governor criticized the idea of an Illinois-specific licensing scheme for federal student loan servicers and asserted that non-profit counselors could do better than servicers or a new ombudsman in helping borrowers to understand their repayment options.

## Additional Supports for Low-Income Students

- **Connecting more students with SNAP benefits**

**HB 3211** (Wallace/Morrison) - *Governor Amendatory Veto*

The Governor has issued an amendatory veto of this initiative of the Heartland Alliance for Human Needs & Human Rights. The Governor wrote that he supports the portion of the bill that would extend eligibility for the federal Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) to low-income community college students enrolled in career and technical education certificate or degree programs. (Currently, students attending college half-time or more are generally not eligible for SNAP.)

The Governor proposes eliminating another component of the bill, under which ISAC would be required to identify students who are *potentially* SNAP-eligible and to provide institutions with information on SNAP. The colleges and universities, in turn, would be required to provide this information to the potentially-SNAP-eligible students identified by ISAC. The Governor argues that developing the process of identifying and informing potentially-eligible students is not an ideal use of ISAC or DHS resources at this time.

Notably, ISAC lacks the information to make a valid determination regarding SNAP eligibility. As a consequence, if the bill were approved as written, in order to identify all students who are *potentially* SNAP-eligible, ISAC would use the agency's limited information about student circumstances to "cast a wide net," broadly over-identifying students who might benefit from the program. Many students who are not ultimately eligible to receive SNAP benefits would receive notice that they could be eligible for the program.

If this AV is upheld, eliminating the mandate on ISAC and schools, ISAC could still develop a pilot program. Running a test before implementing this system statewide could allow ISAC, DHS, and institutions to refine the process with a goal of ensuring that students are served well.