

1 State of Arkansas
2 93rd General Assembly
3 Regular Session, 2021

A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1854

4
5 By: Representatives M. Gray, Barker, M. Davis, Murdock, McNair, M. Hodges, Dotson, Warren, Vaught,
6 Hollowell

7 By: Senator D. Wallace

8

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For An Act To Be Entitled

10 AN ACT TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PILOT
11 PROGRAM FOR STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR INSTITUTIONS OF
12 HIGHER EDUCATION; TO DECLARE AN EMERGENCY; AND FOR
13 OTHER PURPOSES.

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Subtitle

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TO CREATE THE BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PILOT
PROGRAM FOR STATE-SUPPORTED TWO-YEAR
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION; AND TO
DECLARE AN EMERGENCY.

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23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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25 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code Title 6, Chapter 51, Subchapter 1, is amended
26 to add an additional section to read as follows:

27 6-51-106. Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program – Two-year institutions
28 of higher education.

29 (a) There is created, by the end of the 2022-2023 academic year,
30 within the Division of Higher Education a pilot program that shall establish
31 and implement a Baccalaureate Degree Pilot Program for state-supported two-
32 year institutions of higher education to offer education and training that
33 leads to applied baccalaureate degrees and workforce baccalaureate degrees in
34 high-demand career fields that shall include without limitation Bachelor of
35 Science in Nursing degrees.

36 (b) The division shall work with the following entities without



1 limitation to establish and implement the program under subsection (a) of
 2 this section:

- 3 (1) The Department of Health;
- 4 (2) The Arkansas State Board of Nursing; and
- 5 (3) Any other individual or entity involved in applied or
 6 workforce education.

7 (c) The division shall develop an application process and procedure by
 8 which each state-supported two-year institution of higher education may apply
 9 to participate in the program under this section.

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 11 SECTION 2. EMERGENCY CLAUSE. It is found and determined by the
 12 General Assembly of the State of Arkansas that the ongoing public health
 13 emergency has increased the strain on the state’s public health system and
 14 resources; that the shortage of nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
 15 degree has been emphasized by the ongoing public health emergency; that there
 16 are additional high-demand career fields that have been highlighted by the
 17 ongoing public health emergency; and that this act is immediately necessary
 18 in order to create accelerated, streamlined, and more affordable
 19 opportunities by which those choosing health care, nursing, and other high-
 20 demand career fields as their vocation may obtain advanced degrees to enter
 21 the high-need workforce earlier and at less cost. Therefore, an emergency is
 22 declared to exist, and this act being immediately necessary for the
 23 preservation of the public peace, health, and safety shall become effective
 24 on:

- 25 (1) The date of its approval by the Governor;
- 26 (2) If the bill is neither approved nor vetoed by the Governor,
 27 the expiration of the period of time during which the Governor may veto the
 28 bill; or
- 29 (3) If the bill is vetoed by the Governor and the veto is
 30 overridden, the date the last house overrides the veto.