
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 277 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY WILLIAMS, TEPLITZ, WASHINGTON, HUGHES, FONTANA AND
COSTA, DECEMBER 20, 2013

REFERRED TO EDUCATION, DECEMBER 20, 2013

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Department of Education to conduct a study on
2 "high-income/high-aid" policies and the financial aid given
3 to low-income students at all postsecondary institutions in
4 this Commonwealth, including a comparison with the financial
5 aid policies and mechanisms for low-income students to attend
6 postsecondary institutions of the "low-tuition/high-aid"
7 states of North Carolina and California.

8 WHEREAS, Nationally, more than one-third of public colleges
9 and universities and almost two-thirds of private colleges and
10 universities acknowledge that they deliberately provide low-
11 income students with increasingly lower amounts of financial aid
12 that will not meet their financial needs in order to discourage
13 low-income student enrollment, commonly known as "high-
14 income/high-aid" policies, "financial-aid leveraging" or the
15 practice of "gapping"; and

16 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania is considered a "high-income/high-aid"
17 State, with our colleges and universities, both public and
18 private, charging first-time, full-time in-State students with
19 family incomes under \$30,000 a year some of the highest tuition
20 costs in the nation after grants and scholarships; and

1 WHEREAS, North Carolina and California are known as "low-
2 tuition/high-aid" states whose public colleges and universities
3 give low-income students thousands of dollars more per year in
4 financial aid than schools within the Pennsylvania State System
5 of Higher Education and Pennsylvania State-related universities;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, In 2011, the United States Department of Education
8 determined that, nationwide, six of the twelve most expensive
9 public colleges and universities for students with family
10 incomes under \$30,000 a year are in Pennsylvania; and

11 WHEREAS, Pennsylvania contributes to the nationwide trend of
12 colleges and universities giving increasingly more merit aid
13 than need-based aid; and

14 WHEREAS, There are cited cases of Pennsylvania colleges and
15 universities giving "merit aid" to students with family incomes
16 between \$90,000 and \$120,000 a year over their lower-income
17 peers, even though they may not be as strong academically; and

18 WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania Department of Education recognizes
19 that students of Pennsylvania colleges and universities graduate
20 with the sixth highest debt load in the nation, which inhibits
21 these individuals from contributing to the economy of this
22 Commonwealth; and

23 WHEREAS, The increasingly higher cost of postsecondary
24 education has been cited as the reason for decreased enrollment
25 and dropouts at Pennsylvania colleges and universities;
26 therefore be it

27 RESOLVED, That the Senate direct the Department of Education
28 to conduct a study on "high-income/high-aid" policies and the
29 financial aid given to low-income students at all postsecondary
30 institutions in this Commonwealth, including a comparison with

1 the financial aid policies and mechanisms for low-income
2 students to attend postsecondary institutions of the "low-
3 tuition/high-aid" states of North Carolina and California; and
4 be it further

5 RESOLVED, That the Department of Education report its
6 findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Senate no later
7 than March 31, 2014.