



NEW JERSEY

# Association of State Colleges and Universities

150 West State Street, Trenton NJ 08608

Phone (609) 989-1100

## Senate Higher Education Committee Senate Bill No. 1332 – Reporting Employment Data May 18, 2017

On behalf of the state colleges and universities, we respectfully oppose Senate Bill No. 1332, which would amend the New Jersey College Student and Parent Consumer Information Act by requiring four-year public colleges and universities to collect and report certain employment data for recent graduates.

While we support the intent of this legislation to help students decide where to go to college and what to study while they are enrolled, we have concerns about the ability of our institutions to provide complete information, and the possible misuse or misunderstanding of the information that we can provide.

Our principal concern is that the bill requires information that is difficult for our institutions to collect. We rely completely on the willingness of recent graduates to self-report employment and salary status on an institutional survey. Some former students may not want to share this information for personal reasons, and others may not take the time to complete and return a survey.

The response rate to surveys of recent graduates has been as low as 10 percent. A low response rate, combined with the subjective reporting of data – we have no way to verify the information we receive – will lead to potentially misleading information about the employment rates and salaries of graduates.

New Jersey recently launched its statewide longitudinal database, the Education to Earnings Data System. While this system will provide more information on our graduates' employment, it will not provide information for all graduates. The employment information in the data system – which combines information from the Department of Education, the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education, and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development – will cover only graduates who remain in New Jersey to work. A [2016 report by the New Jersey Business and Industry Association](#) found that the largest segment of New Jersey's population who are leaving the state are people between the ages of 18 to 34. This means that a significant number of our graduates who are employed in another state will not be counted in the system.

Even if we had robust data on graduates' earnings, the numbers would not necessarily reflect the quality of the education we provide or the contributions our graduates make to society. Many of our institutions have roots as teachers' colleges, and we continue to train the next generation of educators, as well as nurses, social workers, and other professionals whose service to society is not reflected by their salaries. In addition, students with degrees in the liberal arts and social sciences will likely have lower salaries than students with professional degrees, such as in engineering, with little predictive value of their future earnings.

---

[www.njascu.org](http://www.njascu.org)

*The College of New Jersey  
Kean University  
Montclair State University*

*New Jersey City University  
Ramapo College of New Jersey  
Rowan University*

*Stockton University  
Thomas Edison State University  
William Paterson University*

A significant number of graduates from our institutions immediately enroll in law schools, medical schools, and master's and doctoral programs. While we appreciate that the bill would require reporting on the number and percentage of students who enroll in a graduate program within one year following graduation, the bill would still require these students – who will likely have no salary – to be counted toward:

- the overall number and percentage of students who are employed in a field related to their major one year following graduation;
- the overall number and percentage of students who are employed in any field one year following graduation; and
- the salary earned by students one year following graduation from the institution.

The senior public colleges and universities are proud to provide our graduates with skills for lifelong learning to compete in an ever-changing marketplace, and to participate fully in a democratic society. The value of these skills – such as critical thinking, problem solving, and the ability to communicate and work in teams – cannot simply be counted in a salary.

Thank you for considering our comments.